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THE NEW KEYNES PLAN

IT is a remarkable fact that the most statesmanlike proposals for financing the war have been made not by the spokesman of any party but by the author of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Speaking with lucidity, humour and humanity Mr. Keynes expounded last Wednesday a revised scheme, which not merely improves his previous proposals for compulsory savings, but connects them with a complete plan for a democratic war-economy. The new scheme sketches a budget for next year, which, while relying on the present rates of taxation, substitutes for voluntary the principle of compulsory savings; and its object is not merely to avoid the Scylla of Inflation and the Charybdis of totalitarian rationing, but also to achieve a positive advance towards social equality. By accepting the idea of the iron ration and of family allowances for all, as well as scaling down the rates of compulsory saving for incomes under £5 a week, Mr. Keynes insures that the poorest section of the population will actually be slightly better off than before, provided that the Government solves the problem of increasing production. The heaviest sacrifice is demanded of the class between £5 and £10 a week, which is at present getting off most lightly. In order to insure that the people should feel that the savings really are savings and not disguised taxation, he suggests the ingenious device of permitting us to decide within limits where the savings should be placed and to entrust them, for instance, to Trade Unions and Friendly Societies. Furthermore, they should be withdrawable for special purposes and utilisable for the payment of death duties; and paralleled in the case of men serving with the forces by a schedule of war bonuses. Finally, to ensure the stability of the scheme, it is to be linked with a capital levy after the war. As Mr. Keynes remarked, a country which accepts conscription of man power without a murmur should not jib at conscription of wealth.

The plan can only be judged fairly if it is compared with positive alternatives. Mr. Keynes had no difficulty in showing that if inflation and Nazi regimentation are ruled out, there is no alternative with less financial difficulties or more social justice. We must, as he put it, either raid the pocket or the pantry—and the democrat should be able to decide without difficulty which is preferable. It is to be hoped that the Labour Party will

not niggle at small points or permit prejudice to blind it to the Socialist implications of the plan. Mr. Keynes has given them a weapon with which, given courage and determination, they can enforce much of that equality of sacrifice which they rightly demand.

The "Altmark" and the Law

In the House of Commons on Tuesday Mr. Chamberlain put the British case over the *Altmark* with complete courtesy towards Norway and in a form that satisfies commonsense. In view of the constant violations of international law by the Nazis, the world in general has unreservedly applauded the rescue of these 326 prisoners from abominable conditions. We doubt whether in their hearts even the protesting Norwegians are critical of the spirited decision of Mr. Churchill and Lord Halifax. The legal issue, now the subject of debate between Britain and Norway, is of secondary importance. The *Altmark* was listed as an auxiliary vessel of the German Navy and she was armed. The Norwegians can, therefore, claim that she was exempt from search. The Hague Convention of 1907 lays it down that "belligerent warships" may not remain in the territorial waters of a neutral for more than 24 hours. The *Altmark* was in Norwegian waters for at least 48 hours. This would at once give Britain the verdict were it not that, in the summer of 1939, according to the statement of Professor Koht, the Norwegian Premier, the British Government itself contracted out of the Convention by stipulating that "warships must have the right to sail in Norwegian territorial waters as long as they desired." This does not, however, dispose of the British case: the British hold that the right to remain in neutral waters does not imply the right to use them as a safety corridor to avoid engagement with the enemy. Obviously, the purpose as well as the length of stay must be taken into account: no one suggests, for instance, that it could in any case be legal to use the territorial waters of a neutral as a base of operations. Questions of international law are not, in the end, decided by lawyers.

Empire Slum Clearance

We congratulate the Government warmly on its decision to spend this year £5 million on colonial development, of which £1,400,000 will go to the West Indies. In addition, half-a-million pounds will be spent on practical research in such subjects as medicine and agriculture. The money will go in the West Indies to combat tropical diseases, to remedy scandalous housing conditions and to assist the raising of food on small holdings. The root of the evil in these islands was that everything had been sacrificed to the raising of many crops for export. The chief of these, sugar, had become unremunerative. It is wise to assist the cane sugar industry, but it is wiser still to encourage the coloured population to raise its own food; for in this fertile region food is now actually dearer than in England. If we really mean to break the chains of colonial exploitation, there is a strong case for the promotion of suitable light industries as well. We regret the decision to withhold from publication the unanimous report of the West India Royal Commission, which was no doubt in part the cause of the new reforms; though it might have provided ammunition for Lord Haw Haw, it would also have stimulated us to remedy the evils in our Empire. Such practical action is the most effective propaganda. The real significance of Mr. Malcolm Macdonald's announcement can only be grasped when we compare the conditions of the new fund with those of the old colonial development fund. The latter could only be used for capital works of material benefit to this country and was a paltry £1 million a year. Overheads and running expenses had to be borne by the colonies themselves. This meant that many small backward areas could not afford improvements. This iniquitous system has now been swept away. The new fund can be used for any improvements of social utility, for instance for educational purposes and for the promotion of social services. Moreover, it can be employed for maintenance as well as capital expenditure—not only to build a school or hospital but to pay for its staff. To carry through this reform amid the ruinous expenditure of war is evidence of a breadth of outlook in Mr. Macdonald which is wholly praiseworthy.

Finland's Peril

It is unhappily only too clear that the Russians have broken the Mannerheim Line at its extreme Western end. They claim, probably truly, that they are only six miles from Viborg, and that they have taken the fortified island of Koivisto in the Gulf of Finland. This means that the Line is now outflanked. We gather, however, that the Finns have a second defensive line at or near Viborg, but it was built in a hurry and can only delay the Russian invasion. The Finns are naturally proud of annihilating yet another Russian Division, the 18th, north-east of Lake Ladoga, but this success cannot balance the misfortune in the Karelian Isthmus.

A final appeal to Sweden for direct military aid has been bluntly rejected by the Swedish Government, with the express approval of King Gustav. This attitude, we gather, has the backing of Swedish opinion, which ardently sympathises with the Finns, but allows itself to be paralysed by the fear of a German invasion of South Sweden. Any volunteers who may now arrive from this country will probably come too late and in unimportant numbers. We do not doubt that the Finns will manage to delay the Russian advance, but their numbers are presumably insufficient to halt it. They will no doubt keep up a stubborn guerilla warfare in the forests, until the Russians set them ablaze with incendiary bombs. Their army will then retreat to Swedish territory. Will the Swedes be willing or able to intern it? If not, will the Russians invade their country? It is not certain that mere caution can defend neutrality.

The Hole in the Blockade

Mr. Shinwell, persistently plugging away at the Minister of Economic Warfare about the sixteen Italian vessels which have been loading German coal at Rotterdam for transport to Italy, elicited at last the statement that the British blockade has been allowing Italy to import German coal without interference by the control. This had been done, Mr. Cross explained, as a temporary measure during negotiations with Italy for the replacement of German coal by supplies from other sources. The Minister added that the period of immunity which had been allowed was now drawing to an end, and implied that thereafter the blockade would extend to German coal proceeding to the Mediterranean by way of neutral ports. Mr. Cross stressed the point that the aim of the Government in

enforcing the blockade was to inflict the minimum of inconvenience upon neutrals; but it is impossible to ignore the fact that this coal has been providing Germany with an excellent way of paying for imports of materials to be brought in through Italy, and has thus allowed a very wide loophole. Tenderness for Italian susceptibilities, rather than the desire not to inconvenience neutrals in general, must therefore be taken as the real explanation of the anomaly.

Something for the Universities

Sir John Simon has promised this week to maintain the Government grant to Universities and Colleges at the previous level for the current financial year, and has urged local authorities, which in some cases have been seriously curtailing their help, to follow the Government's example. This is a welcome decision, though no assurance is given for future years, and the maintenance of the grant will not provide sums for giving additional assistance to students whose costs of university education have been heavily increased by evacuation. In many cases students who used to live at home or earn money by part-time occupation have now to bear—or their parents have to—the full cost of maintenance at a distance from home; and this has been responsible for the abandonment of courses by a good many, and is certain to restrict entry seriously in the coming year. The Universities, however, can afford little to help the hard cases, because they have suffered serious losses of revenue through the fall in numbers of students, emergency expenditure on A.R.P. and the equipment of alternative accommodation. Nevertheless, Sir John Simon's announcement is a step in the right direction, and it is to be hoped that local authorities will respond generously both by keeping up their grants and by meeting cases of hardship among holders of scholarships.

Training the Unemployed

The Ministry of Labour has belatedly announced an extension of its schemes for the training of unemployed workers for semi-skilled jobs in which there is a wartime shortage of labour. The numbers under training are to be increased to an annual output of about 40,000 men; and the age-restrictions are being relaxed so as to provide for young men of 19 and for men over 45. The idea is that the young men of 19 can be trained largely for semi-skilled jobs in the armed forces, and that this will reduce the demands of the army on men already possessed of some degree of skill who are needed in the factories. At the other end of the scale, the extension of the schemes to older workers is a sign that the necessity for re-training the long-term unemployed for jobs in which they can be made fit to render at any rate semi-skilled service is at last being realised strongly enough to burst the barriers of suspicion and prejudice. An output of 40,000 workers a year is of course still very small in relation to the size of the gap in the supply of semi-skilled labour caused by military recruitment—to say nothing of the actual and expected expansion in the production of war materials. But this particular scheme is not intended to fill the gap, but rather to deal with two especially urgent problems—that of the untrained adolescent out-of-works and that of the "hard case" of older men. Even in relation to these two problems it is still much too small.

The Week in the House

From Our Parliamentary Correspondent.—The Agricultural Bill continued its stormy passage through the House of Commons last week. An amendment by Mrs. Tate to reduce the period for which grass-land will qualify for the ploughing up subsidy from seven to five years was defeated, after a lively little debate. About ten Conservative Members voted against the Government, and at one moment it looked as if the Chief Whip would have to face a rather nasty division. Another breeze blew up on the rate of interest proposed to be charged to the farmers for the use of implements. Five per cent. for twelve months, with what amounts to a first lien on subsequent subsidy payments, seemed to Members on both sides to be excessive. Finally, Mr. Ramsbotham confessed that he had no idea of the amount of agricultural land requiring to be drained in this country. It seems that, so far as England and Wales are concerned, no comprehensive survey has been made for ten years! This admission, coming in the middle of the Committee Stage of a Bill designed—*inter alia*—to promote and extend drainage, was too much for most of us. But the Government majority remained adequate.

Once again Mr. Lloyd George delighted the House with a speech, delivered late in the evening, in his most characteristic vein. It was largely out of order, but nobody minded that; and the Chairman, sensing the mood of the House, wisely dropped the reins. Apart from Mr. Lloyd George, the assault upon the Government was carried out mainly by Mr. Wilfrid Roberts, Mr. John Morgan (who is becoming a first-class Parliamentary debater), Mr. De La Bere, Mr. Boothby, and Mrs. Tate. It took the form of unexpected attacks delivered at high speed, rather in the manner of the *Achilles* and the *Ajax*. But the *Graf Spee*, although struck in several vulnerable spots, remains unscuttled. It was unfortunate that the Captain, in the shape of Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, was laid up with influenza. In his absence, Mr. Colville and Mr. Ramsbotham did the best they could. But it was clear from the start that they didn't know much about their ship, and had the gravest doubts about her armament. Sir Samuel Hoare, who, we are now given to understand, is the Admiral in supreme command, made one or two fleeting and embarrassed appearances. But he decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and made no attempt to defend either the Bill as such or the general agricultural policy of the Government. One certain result of all this is that this policy will now have to be redesigned.

I have never seen the House so delighted, and so excited, as it was by the *Altmark* episode. When the Prime Minister began his statement last Tuesday with the words, "This admirably conducted operation," there was a roll of cheering which lasted for more than a minute. It would have been easy for Mr. Chamberlain to have evoked a scene of wild enthusiasm, but he made no departure from his normal methods, which are never calculated to arouse passion of any kind. Awarded first prize for good conduct by general consent, Mr. Churchill beamed benevolently from the Treasury Bench.

The second reading of the Old Age and Widows' Pensions Bill was subsequently moved by Mr. Elliot in a speech which revealed great knowledge of the measure, but suffered by reason of its length; and Mr. George Hall, who moved the rejection, stated the Labour case with conspicuous ability. Thereafter the Debate followed normal lines, except for a brush between Sir John Simon and Dr. Dalton, who was accused by the former of betraying confidences. It is clear that there will be a prolonged, and possibly bitter, struggle over Part II of this Bill, which provides for the administration of a Means Test by the Unemployment Assistance Board. It may work, somehow or other, for a time; but it cannot possibly be regarded as a permanent contribution to our social legislation. Opinions differ widely upon the merits of this Bill, and with regard to the results which are likely to flow from it. But there is unanimous support for Mr. Graham White's suggestion that it is high time we produced some kind of order in our social services, and unified the pensions system.

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THE MODERN SPARTA

THE German propaganda machine is furious because the British Navy has released the British prisoners from the *Altmark*. We were decadent; now it seems we are piratical. All sorts of vengeance is to come upon us. . . . Maybe. In the meantime we may calmly consider the line taken by the German press on days when there has been no event to give the Nazis an unexpected interest in international law.

According to the comments of the Nazi press after Hitler's last speech, we have entered a new phase of the war. The conquest of Poland was to be part of that process by which Europe fell peacefully under the rule of the Nordic Germans, with sub-human peoples like the Poles, Czechs and French as their hewers of wood and drawers of water. With the British and French determination to fight and the new partnership between Russia and Germany to account for, the Nazis discovered the need for a different line of propaganda. At first the treaty with Soviet Russia was presented as a temporary expedient to outwit the jealousy of Britain. But as the war goes on, as general shortage presses on the German people, as clothes as well as food are rationed, and coal becomes as much a rarity as butter, a new dynamic has to be found to justify the war. The Nazi movement has always rested on mass psychology; in war even less than in peace is it possible to found this revolution on opposition to Socialism. Whatever the real intentions of the Nazi leaders, they are now compelled to appeal to the German proletariat rather than to the lower middle class from which the original S.A. were recruited.

Ideological rearmament has proceeded apace. Committees were set up to reshape the old programme, battalions of writers were set to redraft the slogans, revise the ideology and prepare the public mind for hostility to Britain whose friendship had been promised to the German masses, and for collaboration with the U.S.S.R., which had been described as the bestial enemy of civilisation. Hitler himself, says the *Völkischer Beobachter*, gave instructions to adjust Germany's "spiritual demands and political ideals and slogans to fit the Nazi world conception." Alfred Rosenberg, the leading anti-Bolshevik, has been made responsible for formulating the new line. The leaders of Germany, like the leaders of Britain, are now, it seems, fighting to create "a better world."

In his new Nazi picture the chief villain is Britain, the plutodemocratic and Jewish State which stands in the way of the world social revolution. France is dismissed as a degenerate country fighting for her possessions. Russia and Germany are complementary economies building a new world and thwarted by the British Empire which has itself been built up on violence and robbery. The war is therefore a struggle between the young and the old, between the new rising States and the old declining Empires, between Labour and Capital, Totalitarian Democracy and sated Plutocracy, between the evil past and the glorious future.

A new vocabulary has appeared in the Nazi press. National Socialism becomes simply Socialism. German imperialism is presented as a pioneering movement to reconstruct the social conditions of the crumbling capitalist world, and the working class is the mainspring of the great revolution that is going on everywhere. Though *Mein Kampf* with its vitriolic attacks on Bolshevism is still on sale in Germany, Marxian phraseology now rolls off the tongues of Nazi propagandists. Under the heading of "Workers of All Countries Unite," Dr. Ley, the leader of the Labour Front, writes in the *Angriff*:

> This is a war by moneyed rulers against Labour and consequently against all productive men. It should therefore mean henceforth to all aspiring peoples who made work the central point of their lives this: Workers of all countries unite so that British capitalism may be smashed. You, young striving peoples of the world, find the way to each other so that you may destroy the British dragon that has blocked your way to the riches of the world.

The Socialist part of the Nazi programme, put into cold storage when Hitler came to power, has been brought out again, and the achievements of Soviet Russia, so lately described by the Führer in terms of almost unprintable abuse, are now praised by the *National Zeitung*, which represents German heavy industry. All this is tied on to propaganda for the final destruction of Britain. The *Münchener Neuester Nachrichten* is explicit enough:

> This war will come to an end only when British predominance is broken and the Continent is freed of the hateful British guardianship. . . . Every discussion about war aims is superfluous and purposeless because from the very beginning of the conflict we have chosen the one and only aim open to us—a Continent rid of Britain.

This war, according to the Nazis, is not simply a struggle for living space and markets in Europe. The *Völkischer Beobachter* explains Germany's world mission and peace aims in this way:

> The point is that we are definitely out to free the living space of Europe from the usurpation of a nation of pirates. The overseas peoples may fight their future battle against British robbery as they wish. That is not our affair. Germany is and will remain a Continental State. But as the greatest Power in the heart of this Continent, Germany will take good care that the evil influence of Britain should never again be felt in Europe and that the European nations should not be disturbed in their peaceful life.

Hitler is a supreme opportunist and no change of policy or ideology is altogether impossible. There are still those in this country who hope for a Right-wing revolution in Germany. They know that German capitalism is terrified of the Bolshevisation of Germany and that Göring would prefer a more moderate policy. They notice that in the Field-Marshal's latest speech no reference was made to Soviet Russia. They even speculate about the possibility that Germany will again turn right about and that those generals who have always looked forward to securing Finland as part of Germany's strategic *lebensraum*, may win the day and go to the help of the Finns against Germany's new ally. But never since June 30th, 1934 has the Reichswehr triumphed against the Nazis, and there is no sign to-day that the dynamic of National Socialism will give way before military and capitalist groups which struggle to maintain existence in the totalitarian State.

What must be the reply of English Democrats and Socialists? They are not likely to believe in Dr. Ley's conversion to the thesis of International Socialism. They know that National Socialism is at best a caricature of that which they had hoped for; they know that they are the heirs of a civilisation in which freedom is an integral part. They will urge that everything should be done to prevent a full alliance between Germany and Russia; it cannot be in Stalin's interest for Germany to conquer Europe. A close alliance of the two Totalitarian Empires

would mean not the Bolshevisation of Germany, but the destruction of the remaining elements of that genuine Socialism that began to emerge in the happier days of the Russian Revolution. Stalin must be aware that whatever Hitler's present propaganda, nothing has happened to change the Nazi view that Slavs are meant to be slaves.

We must, however, face the worst—the possibility of a solid slave State, stretching from the Rhine to the Pacific. In that case Western civilisation will be fighting for its life. Its weakness is its economic anachronisms, its failure to organise that economy of abundance which is ours if we seize it. Its strength is an inheritance of principles which it often violates, but constantly reaffirms. The concepts of freedom and law, the habit of intellectual speculation which comes down to us from Athens and from Rome is strong in the West and cannot be rooted out. The West has often been cruel, but it has condemned cruelty, and struggled against it and diminished it. The Nazi creed regards torture as the proper instrument of government and encourages its use against all who are not Nazis. How are we to preserve in the West our belief in individual and personal development? Ancient Athens, which suffered from the same imperialist weaknesses, met a similar problem in its life and death struggle with the slave State of Sparta. We cannot do better to-day than to recall the advice of Pericles and remember the disaster that befell when his successors departed from that advice. Athens was defeated because it embarked on adventures that were beyond its strength, because it wasted its resources at Syracuse, because it listened to a demogogic cry for spectacular victory when it should have consolidated its moral and physical position at home. The advice of Pericles to the people of Athens was to concentrate on defence, to complete the long walls, maintain sea communications, and undertake no foreign adventures; behind these walls he urged them to preserve their freedom, improve their own civilisation and live their own life whatever the Spartans might say or do. He knew that it was not possible to impose a conception of life that has its roots deep in history on States which have no such roots. It was the business of Athens to preserve and improve her civilisation and spread it where she could. That advice is as good in the twentieth century A.D. as it was in the fifth century B.C.

THE FRENCH SCENE

THE unanimous vote of confidence which the Chamber gave M. Daladier after the secret session was an impressive affair. 534 votes for, and none against. All is lovely in the garden. You might, of course, argue that it is just a little too good to be true to see everybody in complete agreement; and you might smile at the hotchpotch of autographs at the bottom of the motion: Flandin, Blum, Pezet, Marin, Chiappe, Chichery—people who, not so long ago, had no great love for each other. But that is not the point. The point is that German propaganda had been more active even than usual, trying to represent France as being in a state of political turmoil, with opinion divided on almost every question, and perhaps on the brink of a Cabinet crisis. The resolution was intended to show that the country was behind the Government, and that it was determined to pursue the war "to a victorious conclusion." What the motion did not intend to suggest was that everybody was agreed on everything, and that the Chamber had become a Reichstag-like collection of 534 yes-men. After all, there had been a two-days secret session, and it is revealing no secrets to say that some of the speeches were anything but uncritical. The criticism one hears in the lobbies is of two kinds—one, against certain genuine shortcomings and also against certain "undemocratic" measures, such as the astonishing recent decree making punishable the expression of "harmful views"; and the other, against something quite different: namely, against that policy of sacrifice which Paul Reynaud has been trying to get the country to accept. Dear old Radical-Socialists! They are patriots; but oh! how they hate heavy taxation; and how they hate the thought of rationing; and how fondly they think of the financial methods of the last war when, for the first three years at any rate, nobody paid anything at all in excess of his pre-war *patente* and *mobilière*, and a few other odds and ends. And how unpleasant to be told by Paul Reynaud: *Messieurs*, this war is not only a military war, but also, and perhaps above all, an economic and financial war. Pull up your socks while you have still got socks; for you have no idea yet of all the hardships and sacrifices that are in store for you and the whole French people. . . . In short, we are witnessing something of a conflict in France between the advocates of the policy of economic and financial super-sacrifice and those who do not want to be too hard on the people, who would like business to be as "usual" as possible. The whole question is fundamental, and we shall probably hear a lot more about it. . . . But to return to the Chamber vote. Decidedly that phrase about the "victorious conclusion" of the war was important, and deliberate. It was meant as a final rebuff to the German propagandists, and also as a warning to those, especially in neutral and non-belligerent countries, who were putting some rather extravagant interpretations on Mr. Sumner Welles's trip to Europe. And it was also meant as a reply to that Gestapo questionnaire which, M. Daladier declared, had recently been seized: a questionnaire in which the numerous Nazi agents in France were asked to give their views on Daladier's personal position, on the possibility of a Cabinet crisis, on possible successors, on French feelings about England, and Italy, and so forth.

So far so good. And, apart from the squabble about the policy of sacrifices—a squabble which in the end will, I think, be settled in Reynaud's favour (for any other solution would severely shake that big structure of Anglo-French financial solidarity which Reynaud has done so much to build up), all in France is relatively well. In its war aims, the country as a whole is genuinely united, and scarcely anybody seriously believes in the possibility of a negotiated peace with Hitler; such a peace would only be an armistice, and a brief one, too; and then France would be in for her Blitzkrieg, before she had time to mobilise again; and then the French would be given the pretty treatment the Poles are getting now. What is happening in Poland has made the whole impossibility of a peace with the Nazis as good as axiomatic. In the Army they know it even better than in the rear.

Say what you like about the rear; but the Army is democratic, with a remarkable spirit of comradeship among all the ranks, and with a great freedom of discussion. They dislike the papers in the Army, with the white spaces cut out by the censorship. In Paris we put up with it more readily. Simply because there is no getting away from the fact that in wartime the French people do largely accept the *salut public* principle, that *salut public* principle which Herriot (whom you could not suspect of undemocratic feelings) defended in the following terms:

> The most important thing is that nothing should interfere with the indispensable unity of all Frenchmen. Our enemies must realise that we have understood their tactics. Their policy, before attacking, is to create dissentions in the camp of their prospective victims. We intend not to tolerate any form of enemy propaganda, which is the same thing as treason. The First Republic has taught us some lessons in this respect, and has shown us some examples, grim but salutary. In wartime every government must be a government of public safety.

We have heard a great deal about the repression of Communist propaganda; and some of the forms this repression has taken may be considered regrettable, especially in the case

of certain rank-and-file Communists. What we have not heard about is the repression of those Nazi activities in France, which Kerillis recently denounced in a series of articles. It is said that the Nazis, not belonging to a single organisation like the Communists, are more difficult to trace; one wonders if that is really true. Ybarnégaray said recently in a speech that too much of that sort of thing was still going on " in certain clubs and drawing-rooms." Apropos of this, the *Canard Enchaîné* declares:

> A number of citizens have wondered on several occasions what had happened to the repression of defeatist propaganda in clubs and drawing-rooms. We can assure our readers that this repression has not been lost sight of. Since last week, the closest watch is kept by the police on certain fifth-floor flats in the Belleville and Ménilmontant districts.

Which, in London terms, would mean the clubs and drawing-rooms of Houndsditch and Bethnal Green.

After all, these, compared with the war, are relatively small matters. The war is the thing. It has meant for France a gigantic effort—the kind of effort no other country has perhaps experienced. She has five million men in the Army—almost the whole manhood of the country. These men are bearing the unpleasantness of it all with fortitude and good humour. So, in spite of much grumbling against the small military allowances, are the women—not least the women who have been left in almost exclusive charge of the vast machine of France's agriculture. The workers in the factories work well, and there are no cases of sabotage or ca' canny; for even in the case of the Communists the war comes first, and Communism a bad second—all the more so as in the great majority of cases the men are waiting to see what " Communism " really means, and the case of Finland has only deepened their distrust of Stalin and their apprehensions. If Stalinism ultimately justifies itself, good and well, but it is no use putting too much money on it now. This, I think, is the attitude prevalent among what remains of the Communist rank-and-file. The rest are more " neutral " even than that, as far as any party allegiance is concerned, and the distrust of Stalin even deeper. But it is partly owing to the mobilisation, and partly owing to this sitting-on-the-fence attitude of French workmen, who in the past belonged to the Communist Party, that the C.G.T.'s membership is still so low. The C.G.T. has reconstructed on a new basis both its professional and departmental trade unions, with " loyal co-operation " with the employers and the State as its slogan; and time will show whether this framework will be well filled in. What the C.G.T. leaders claim with great satisfaction is that many of the unions, formerly wholly or predominantly under Communist control, are steadily coming over to the new C.G.T.—notably the railwaymen and transport workers.

Of the German and Austrian refugees, and their camps, I shall write another time; I am expecting to go and visit some next week. That there are great hardships in the camps is true; especially hardships caused by the cold; but in most cases the food is adequate; and if there are cases of ill-treatment they are the exception, not the rule; and I use the word " ill-treatment " according to French, not German standards. That the men in the camps are treated as mobilisable material—either for labour squads or for the Foreign Legion, is a matter on which there may be differences of opinion; but, when one considers that five million Frenchmen are in the Army, one can appreciate the lack of sympathy the French feel for those among the anti-Nazi refugees who would stay in their camp rather than join the Legion. There is one camp, at any rate, where conditions are bad, and that is the camp of Vernet, where they keep " undesirables," among them men who fought in the International Brigade, and who are, consequently, assumed to be Communists. But Vernet is a story apart.

I shall mention foreign policy only briefly. This policy is " *gagnons la guerre.*" As for " peace aims," there is a certain muddle about it, and one can only regret that the French propaganda services should not have given any publicity at all to constructive British proposals like those of my friend, Crossman. The attitude of the neutral countries, " for whose existence we are fighting," is sometimes watched with some puzzlement; with Spain good relations are cultivated with quite extraordinary care, and with meticulous caution never to do anything that would offend the Spanish Government; towards Italy, the attitude is hopefully sympathetic but discreet. Regarding Russia, there was, some time ago, some sharp difference of opinion, the Right advocating a breach of diplomatic relations, and the *Temps* and the *Figaro* asking that the Allies declare war on Russia. In one case, the motive was largely ideological, though the main argument used for declaring war on Russia was that it would give the Allies greater freedom of movement and new strategic possibilities against Hitler, who was trying to coop up Britain and France " behind their Maginot Line " in the hope that they would become gradually tired of the whole thing. But in the case of the *Figaro* one could detect some other motive. M. d'Ormesson was so thrilled with the interest and sympathy shown for Finland by the Italians that he apparently already visualised the division of Europe into two blocs—a civilised Atlantic-Mediterranean bloc composed of Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, England, France, Spain, Italy, the Balkans and Turkey, and a Barbarian bloc composed of Germany and Russia. A day-dream, of course, based only on the flimsy pro-Finnish demonstrations in Italy. Apparently the British Government made it plain that it had no intention of taking on Russia, as well as Germany; and this view coincided with that of many Frenchmen who felt that a complete breach with the Soviets would only finally consolidate, and irretrievably, their alliance with Germany; and even the *Intransigeant* gave the other day a great deal of publicity to an article by Victor Serge, a Russian Trotzkyist, denying that " Hitler had Stalin in his pocket," and saying why he did not believe it. So Mr. Souritz is still at his Embassy in the rue de Grenelle, and all we have had so far (and this greatly pleased the Right) is a little " Arcos Raid " on the Soviet trade delegation, which is said to have produced a great deal of evidence of Russo-German collusion in matters of propaganda. One can well believe it.

ALEXANDER WERTH

Paris, Feb. 14th.

RAILWAY STOCKHOLDERS' WAR BONUS

RAILWAY shareholders have reason to be thankful for war and a National Government: the former for petrol rationing, the elimination of road competition and increased traffics, and the latter for agreeing that a large part of increased war earnings shall accrue to the railway companies.

The Government assumed control of the railways on September 1st. An executive committee of the railway managers was appointed to operate the four amalgamated companies and the London Passenger Transport Board, under the control of the Minister of Transport. The financial terms of control were left for later settlement. The National Government, noted for its protection of private enterprise, shirked the question of permanent acquisition and has now announced the arrangement made between the Minister of Transport and the railways. For the duration, the railways are to receive a most generous share of wartime profits. In effect, the companies are entitled to earn up to the standard revenue, fixed under the 1921 Act, which reduced the fifty-odd railway companies to four large systems. To do so they can adjust fares and charges to meet increased costs. This standard revenue, based on the very different conditions of the last post-war period, has never been approached. The standard revenue of the four main line companies is approximately £51 millions, while that of the L.P.T.B. is to be the amount necessary to pay 5½ per cent. on the Board's " C " stock. Failure to pay this amount to date has caused headaches for the Board.

Under the new arrangement all receipts and payments are pooled, the balance being the net revenue. If it does not total in the case of the railways the average net revenue for 1935, 1936 and 1937, and the Board's revenue for the year to June 30th, 1939, the Government is to make up the difference. This is approximately £40 millions, or some £7½ millions more than the total earned by the railways in 1938 and the Board to June 30th, 1939, which are the last full pre-war financial years. On top of the Government's guaranteed £40 millions, the railways and the Board are allowed to earn another £3½ millions. After this, of any net revenue earned additionally up to the standard revenues the Government takes one half and the companies and the Board the other half. The Government gets anything above the standard revenues.

Important from the shareholders' point of view is the provision that rates, fares and charges will be adjusted to meet variations in working costs and certain other conditions arising from the war. The Minister of Transport can authorise such increases. In other words, railway shareholders are released from carrying any risk; they are guaranteed for the duration of the war more than they obtained in 1938; they are entitled to share with the Government in further profits until they have received the maximum revenues fixed in 1921 on a very much over-capitalised basis; avoidance of E.P.D. is hoped for, and they are absolved from suffering from changes in costs during the war period. This last is the case, not only because charges can be raised to meet increased costs, but also because maintenance can be taken on the 1935-37 basis, and adjusted to higher prices. In addition, war damage up to £10 millions a year can be taken as expenses and charged against payments. In sum, if wages go up, as they are about to under a new agreement, the railway users, of whom the Government is the most important, will have to face the bill. The travelling public will have to pay more too, of course, although they are already suffering from a small petrol ration and have no alternative but to make long journeys by the slower and less frequent trains provided.

Though he must suffer, the shareholder will gain. The two most prosperous lines are the L.M.S. and the G.W.R. If the standard revenues were earned there would be sufficient available to pay 8 per cent. to the ordinary shareholders in each case. Those of the L.N.E.R. could receive 4⅜ per cent. on the deferred shares, which have received no dividend for years, the Southern deferred shareholders could get 3¼ per cent. and the L.P.T.B. "C" stockholders their 5½ per cent. These are, of course, maximum amounts, and it is difficult to gauge whether the elimination of road competition and increased Government traffic will suffice to enable them to be earned. From the boom that has taken place on the Stock Exchange in railway stocks it is not ruled out as a possibility. It is interesting to compare actual recent results with the promise of the standard revenue. In 1938 the only ordinary shareholders who got any return on their investment were those of the G.W.R., who received ½ per cent. The only year in which standard revenue was anywhere near approached was 1929. In that year L.M.S. paid 4½ per cent. to its ordinary shareholders and G.W.R. 7½ per cent. The L.N.E.R. paid only 3 per cent. on its preferred ordinary shares and nothing, of course, on its deferred. The standard revenue, which the new agreement permits, would enable these payments to be considerably bettered.

In justification of this generous treatment, it is argued that 1938 was a bad railway year; that there was every indication that 1939 earnings were better, owing to higher charges and increased traffics; and that as a result of a new road-rail agreement, resulting from the Square Deal campaign, the prospects for shareholders were very much improved. It is not mentioned that railwaymen were demanding higher wages and that a strike was threatened just before war came. 1939's improvement was probably largely due to increased armament work, and higher charges; and the road-rail agreement was the result of Government action, actual, implied or threatened. Even so, if these arguments of the railways be accepted they would only justify the guaranteeing of the average earnings of 1935-7, roughly the £40 millions, and would not justify the sharing in war traffics up to the "standard revenue."

Despite favourable treatment since 1921 the railways have never earned the standard revenue. Such favourable treatment included derating, relief from rates through reductions in railway assessments, the passing of various acts controlling road transport to the advantage of the railways, and the granting of powers to the railways to operate road vehicles and to invest in road undertakings. Generosity to the railway worker cannot be pleaded as an excuse. The lowest grades are notoriously underpaid.

Leaving figures aside, the new arrangement is on principle indefensible. There is no justification for the Government to accept the argument of the shareholder that, because he has done comparatively badly of recent years, the war should serve as an excuse to do him a good turn. Earnings will increase, but not because of any action on the part of the railway shareholder or manager, but because of the Government's war effort, which happens to give protection from competition to the railways and to enable some expenses to be reduced through slower and fewer services at a time when profitable traffics increase.

The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in recent speeches have vouchsafed that the Government is pursuing a financial policy designed to avoid inflation. The Government is particularly emphatic in its demand that the vicious spiral be avoided and that wages should not automatically rise with prices. This principle does not seem to apply to railway shareholders, whose income is to be increased for the duration, and stabilised at the higher level through adjustment of charges to costs at the expense of the travelling public and railway user. Railway charges play an important part in costs, and rises in the end are passed on to consumers. The financial arrangement between the Government and the companies may well have an indirect influence on the cost of living. The shareholder makes no sacrifice. Is this because he does not belong to that section of the community which we are told must cut down its expenditure because it absorbs two-thirds of consumption?

The agreement is unnecessarily costly. The cost to the Government is every penny that goes into the pockets of the shareholder in excess of what he need have been paid. The minimum possible was the 1938 revenue, and the maximum justifiable, on the most generous interpretation, the 1935-7 average. On either of these bases the Government would have benefited to the extent of the balance above what it paid shareholders. Instead the Government is to get nothing on the next £3½ millions and only half above that until £68 millions has been earned, i.e., the standard revenue, 5½ per cent. on "C" stock, plus the Government share. After that the Government gets any unlikely balance. If it had been concerned for the interests of the nation instead of those of the railway owners, it would have paid the 1938 revenue, as in 1914 it paid the 1913 revenue. It would have left the final settlement for after the war. Better still—but this could not be expected from a Tory Government—it would have announced that it was acquiring the railways permanently, would pay the 1938 revenues for the duration, and agree on terms of purchase after the war. It would then have worked out a scheme for public ownership which gave the travelling public and the railwayman some say in operation, instead of leaving everything to the railway executive committee. If there is to be Government acquisition after the war, and many think the railways will never return to private ownership, the present agreement makes it almost certain that a high price will have to be paid to shareholders. This is because, despite the return of the problem of road competition, they will demand that the purchase price bear some relation to the guaranteed and actual wartime revenue; worse still, to the standard revenue so unfortunately resurrected.

In view of the generous treatment meted out to railway

stockholders, including the London Transport "C" stockholders, it is not surprising that the arrangement has had a good press. As the *Daily Telegraph* remarked in its City columns, "If railway stockholders have had to wait many months for news of the financial basis of Government control, it can at least be said that the terms now announced have been worth waiting for." "At least" is good in view of the boom that has taken place in railway stocks on the London Stock Exchange.

ERNEST DAVIES

A LONDON DIARY

I HAVE been reading Arthur Greenwood's *Why We Fight* (Routledge, 5*s*.) and also his article in last Sunday's *Reynolds* defending the electoral truce. Mr. Greenwood is a candid writer and he probably expresses the attitude of the majority of his fellow Labour M.P.s in this book. Looking back on almost forty years of Parliamentary activity by the Party and over a hundred years of Trade Unionism, he devotes nearly the whole of his space to a description of the social improvements which cautious working-class pressure has obtained from a squeezable ruling class, rich enough to afford them and adroit enough to concede them in time. It is a remarkable story; and it reveals one of the fundamental reasons for the support given to the war by Mr. Greenwood and his Parliamentary colleagues. They are fighting not so much for a new world in the future, as to conserve the inheritance of the past: the Trade Unionist who says we must go through with it is not primarily concerned for oppressed Poles or Czechs or Jews, but for his own rights and liberties which he sees imperilled by the Nazi war machine. If Mr. Chamberlain's war aim is to defend capitalism, Mr. Greenwood's is to defend the place which the industrial worker has won for himself within the British capitalist order. That is the real reason why he argued in an article in *Reynolds* last Sunday, for keeping the electoral truce for the duration. He feels that, while the war lasts, both sides of the House have a common interest; and he is content to remain in Opposition, leaving government to those who have always governed us and gradually conceded some of our demands.

* * *

I understand how an experienced Parliamentarian can come to such conclusions, and I admit that as long as the Labour Movement accepts them, there is no point in breaking the electoral truce, or urging the Parliamentary Party to prefer the responsibility of power to their present position of influence without responsibility. The only excuse for fighting the Government is if we know exactly what we should do, if we, not Mr. Chamberlain, were organising the war economy. On these points Mr. Greenwood is significantly silent, or contents himself with rounded platitudes. He seems to think of the war as a period when Socialism can stand still, to resume its advance when peace returns; and even the future peace is still for him a 1918 affair on "improved" League of Nations lines. That is why Labour's peace aims, even in their new and vastly improved version, evoke little response among working people. This statement erred in laying it down that no peace could ever be made with Hitler, since the onus for refusing reasonable terms should be put on to the Nazis. Moreover, they do not show a determination to lay its foundations during the war itself. English people are shrewd enough to know that they cannot after this war "go back to normal"—especially as normal in the minds of their rulers really means Europe and Britain before 1914! They would follow a Socialist leadership which showed how even war could be made the great equaliser and solvent of social anachronisms. As I listened last Wednesday to Mr. Keynes, outlining at the Fabian lunch his plan of Socialist war finance, I began to realise the true significance of the party-truce. Here was an economist of pre-eminent capacity who knows exactly what he would do with our finances to win the war and to preserve both liberty and social justice, but he is not a member of the Labour Party, nor as far as I know does the Party even ask his advice. But without a Keynes' finance-plan and schemes of the same quality for industrial reorganisation, the Labour Party is in no position to challenge the Government. It will remain a loyal Opposition, criticising in detail but accepting in general the inadequacies of the National Government.

* * *

I have enjoyed the fourth number of *Us*, Mass-Observation's new weekly. It deals with the Southwark by-election and gives some most interesting facts. Labour played the election down leaving the running to the Stop-the-War candidate who was pushed by the Communists and ignoring Mrs. Van der Elst's freak candidature. This seems to have been shrewd tactics, as the voters got sick of the incessant canvassing by Communist volunteers from all over London. M.O. counted twenty-two different pieces of literature distributed by the Stop-the-War candidate to Mrs. Van der Elst's fourteen and Labour's nine; and calculates that the total literature distributed came to 127,500. Again whereas Labour had four cars, the Communists collected thirty-seven and pulled in well over 1,000 workers to help on polling day. In spite of these efforts the Peace candidate only polled 200 more votes than Mrs. Van der Elst, whose slogan was "I shall bring more happiness to the people of Southwark than they have ever known." How she proposed to do it was not quite clear. Her first election special contained two main items, an article headed "The Soul of a Magician" and a short story happily entitled "The Tragedy of the Chateau de Borgia." If *Us* can continue to combine instruction and entertainment of this kind, it should be a success. The address is 6 Grotes Building, Blackheath, and the cost is five shillings a quarter.

* * *

I am afraid that people are already forgetting the lesson which the first evacuation taught them about the conditions of the people in the slums. In September, it looked as though the social conscience had at last been aroused, but now a new mood of stubborn resistance to any billeting is common among all classes in the evacuation areas. To one rich woman who talked of "little pigs," I replied, "Of course they behave like pigs—they have been brought up in pig-sties. And it is only because millions of people have been living like pigs that you have those pearls round your neck." A graphic explanation of the habits of many of these children is given by the Housing Centre in their exhibition at 13 Suffolk Street, Haymarket, under the title, "The Homes They Come From." Photographs, drawings and short captions reveal the facts of the present and the possibilities of the future. I specially like Mrs. Lasenby's drawings of an overcrowded tenement, with only one tap and one w.c. for five families, that is for some eighteen persons. In such circumstances how can a child be taught that cleanliness is next to godliness? Other photographs and drawings emphasise not only the need of better material houses, but the valuable part that can be played by a trained property manager who gives advice as well as collecting the rent. There is a plan, too, of buildings to be used now for evacuees and eventually as holiday camps. But the main lesson is the necessity for national planning—there are still half a million houses unfit for human habitation. It is hoped to show this exhibition in various provincial towns: it ought to be given the widest possible circulation.

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I was very sorry to hear the other day of the death of my old friend, McGregor Ross. He became known to the British public in 1927 when he published *Kenya from Within*. He had served for twenty-three years in Kenya, had been Director of Public Works and a Member of the Kenya Legislative Council. His attacks on the ruling group in Kenya were extremely effective; he knew his subject, was scrupulously accurate, and hit hard every time. Like some other mild little men, he had a fierce controversial style and a passion for righteousness that made him at times almost ferocious. He belonged to that peculiar class of Englishman: the gentle, unassuming and almost Quaker type which, once convinced of

injustice and oppression, cannot rest day or night until they have exposed and remedied it.

* * *

Those unwise admirers who have compared Mr. Chamberlain to Jesus Christ have made it difficult to do him justice. I believe myself that he can be reasonably defended as a man who did his best to keep his country out of war and was defeated by forces which might have defeated any man, but which he did not even begin to understand. I have been reading a curiously conventional life of the Prime Minister (*Neville Chamberlain : Man of Peace*, by Derek Walker-Smith ; Hale, 15*s*.) which answers some of the fascinating historical and psychological questions posed by his career. A question, for instance, that I often hear discussed is whether after Munich Mr. Chamberlain, in his heart, believed that he had brought peace in our time? I am sure that he hoped so. The crisis was so difficult and the complexities so great and the relief from war so general that Mr. Chamberlain appears to have been swept off the ground and to have believed that he was the instrument of Providence in keeping the peace. One of his colleagues at that time remarked that the Prime Minister displayed an almost mystical view of his function and one hears that Mrs. Chamberlain, who, as Mr. Walker-Smith insists, has greatly influenced her husband, has herself been greatly influenced by the Buchmanites. Ruminating on this, I remembered one of Logan Pearsall Smith's *Trivia* which seemed to bear on this moment in Mr. Chamberlain's career. I turned it up and here it is :

> But oh, those heavenly moments when I feel this trivial universe too small to contain my Attributes ; when a sense of the divine Ipseity invades me ; when I know that my voice is the voice of Truth, and my umbrella God's umbrella !

This fragment is called *Apotheosis* and it was published in April, 1918. CRITIC

THE REVOLT AGAINST CHURCH AND STATE

WHAT is the State? From among the many answers that have been given to this question I select one that is comparatively uncontroversial. The State, whatever else it may be, is an institution which human beings have established to fulfil their common needs and to further their common purposes. Among these common needs and purposes are fellowship, security, liberty, and the development of the individual personality. In so far as it fulfils the needs and furthers the purposes, the State succeeds ; in so far as it does not, it fails and should, therefore, be superseded as soon as we can contrive a more serviceable instrument. Judged by this standard, the modern State is most emphatically a failure. It does not give security. On the contrary, it requires its members to kill other human beings whom they have never seen, whenever it deems the mass slaughter of the citizens of some other State to be desirable, while it imposes upon them a conception of its (not of *their*) welfare which can be promoted only be exacting from them the most horrible sacrifices, in order that it may harm the citizens of its alleged enemy. It is the enemy of human liberty. In order to maintain its freedom it deprives its citizens of theirs ; for when the State goes to war to preserve its independence, who may call his soul his own?

Finally, the State is an anachronism. In a world which drives increasingly towards economic and cultural unity, the State seeks by every means in its power to emphasise and perpetuate the divisions between mankind upon which it thrives. The point is admirably put in the Report recently presented to the League of Nations by the Committee presided over by Mr. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, from which I take the following extract :

> The world, for all its political severance, is growing daily closer knit ; its means of communication daily more rapid ; its instruments for the spread of knowledge daily more efficient. . . . At the same time the constituent parts of the world for all their diversity of political outlook are growing in many respects more similar ; agricultural States are becoming rapidly more industrialised, industrial States are stimulating their agriculture. . . . Neither the economic nor the physical contagion—nor, indeed, the moral—can be checked by national action alone except by recourse to almost complete isolation.

Chief among the forces making for world unity is the abolition of distance. The changes in the range and pace of human living resulting from the abolition of distance are prodigious. Yet while our circumstances have changed beyond the imagination of our predecessors, there has been no corresponding change in our political structure. While the world has shrunk to the size of a continent, the boundaries of the nation States have remained comparatively fixed. We have ceased to travel by horse and on foot, yet we still live in communities adapted to the horse and foot mode of travel. And precisely because these national units are an anachronism they are driven to resort to a thousand and one obstructive, economic devices—currency restrictions and tariffs and quotas and customs duties and favoured nation clauses—to serve as barriers between themselves and their neighbours, devices which by their very nature disable the States which adopt them from fulfilling the purposes for which they were designed. For, striving to maintain their economic self-sufficiency in a world which applied science has prepared for economic unity, they must withhold from their members the potential benefits which men's scientific skill has made available.

The State is not the only institution which is manifestly out of harmony with the needs of modern man ; there is also the established Church. But while the State is hostile to man's good, the Church is largely irrelevant. Largely, not wholly, since movements are still alive in the Church, for example, the Anglo-Catholic Socialist movement, represented to-day by such men as Conrad Noel, or the various pacifist groups, which have not given up the attempt to apply the precepts of Christ's teaching to the distinctive evils of our time. But these movements are neither typical nor influential and scarcely leaven the apathy of the main ecclesiastical mass. So far as the Churches in mass are concerned, the facts are sufficiently familiar ; congregations melt away, pews are empty, the published figures of Sunday school scholars decline and again decline, family men drop family prayers, the right men fail to present themselves for the Ministry. Christianity, in short, no longer occupies in the lives of contemporary men and women the place which it occupied in the lives of their fathers. For a time the old codes survived their supernatural sanctions, and men who had jettisoned Jehovah or ceased to trouble their minds about Him one way or the other, continued to act as if they were still under the surveillance of that all-seeing eye. But the restraints enjoined by Christian ethics could not indefinitely survive the sanctions prescribed by Christian metaphysics, and to-day—the fact is, alas, only too obvious—few men and women think it possible to live in the way which Christ recommended. The following extract from Bishop Hensley Henson's recently published book *The Church of England* succinctly states the position. "The modern world seems to be ever more completely self-absorbed and self-satisfied. It has no use for religion in any form" ; while the "strong but waning tradition of Christian feeling still obscures the general abandonment of Christian principle, nothing can finally avert the effect of de-Christianised national habit."

Why has the Church lost its hold? There can be only one answer : because it no longer teaches a creed which fulfils the spiritual needs of contemporary man. The reasons for this failure are too numerous to detail here. But among the most important is the obvious inability of the Church to cope with the crisis of our times. It is still regarded as the Church of the rich—"For God's sake, don't touch the Church of England!" said a House of Commons wit at the time of the debate on the revised Prayer Book. "It is the only thing that stands between us and Christianity"—and it has never succeeded in resolving the manifest contradiction between Christ's teaching which its members are paid to preach and to

profess, and the support which they feel that, as citizens, they owe to the State when it goes to war. The consequences may best be described in the words of Canon Raven. "The best minds of the younger generation are refusing the Church because its travesties Christ . . . The very pick of our boys at Cambridge will not consider ordination for one moment."

Like the State, the Church is an institution which exists to express and further men's common purposes. But while the State expresses and furthers in regard to this world, the Church purports to do so in regard to the next. If I am right, both institutions are failing to perform the function for which they were intended. It is, therefore, no accident that the two most distinctive movements of our time are a movement to supersede the State and a movement to bypass the Church.

The propaganda for Federal Union is by now sufficiently familiar to readers of this journal. It is, however, sufficiently obvious that the driving force behind the propaganda is to be found in men's great and increasing dissatisfaction with the modern State. It is because they recognise that it is the State which threatens them with war, which deprives them of liberty, which obstructs the manifest drive of the world to unity, that they so enthusiastically endorse a propaganda which seeks to relieve our distresses not by changing human nature, but by bringing human political organisation up to date. "The whole intellectual life of mankind", Wells has recently written, "revolts against this intolerable suffocating murderous nuisance, the obsolescent national State."

Nature abhors a vacuum in the spiritual world no less than in the physical, and it is not to be expected that men should live indefinitely without religion. To-day, being manifestly incommoded by its lack, they are driven to devise religious substitutes. Thus in the absence of God they make gods of men, and as the bearded figure above the skies grows nebulous and remote, an all-too-human substitute complete with raincoat and moustache takes his place. Or men make an idol of the State and sacrifice their lives and happiness upon its altar.

These substitutes for a spiritual life cannot continue indefinitely to fill the bill, and already there are signs of religious renascence. Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Astrology are all in their various ways candidates for the position which the established Church held and has lost. But the two former (possibly) and astrology (certainly) should be regarded as substitutes for religion rather than as its stirring. Moreover, as always happens in a time when the established Church ceases to reflect current belief, or to satisfy the demands of the social consciousness, there are movements of withdrawal inspired by something of the same motives as those which led to the foundation of the monasteries in the Middle Ages. The fact that they concentrate upon the individual soul does not necessarily mean, any more than it meant in the case of the monasteries, that their adherents turn their backs on the difficulties and sufferings of their contemporaries. Perhaps the most striking movement of this kind is that which finds expression in the books of Gerald Heard and in the later books of Aldous Huxley. At present the number of its adherents is small, but its intellectual content is impressive, and if I am right in thinking that it reflects the need of the times from which it takes its rise, it may spread with great rapidity. While it holds all the religions in fee, it makes special acknowledgements to Buddhism. Reality, we are informed, is a single universal consciousness. We are, in respect of our true selves, expressions of this consciousness, but we are separated from our true selves by a fictitious ego which inhabits a semi-real world, the familiar world of everyday, wherein it seeks to satisfy its cravings, to realise its ideals, and to pursue its ambitions. These endeavours are doomed to disappointment. Therefore, we must cease to live on the plane of unreality, by mastering the technique which will enable us to cross the threshold separating us from our true selves, and so to realise our oneness with reality. The technique in question still practised in the East, has been largely forgotten in the West, but provided that we are prepared to order our lives according to certain principles, the technique may be recaptured and the goal of human existence, identification of self with reality, achieved. Here, then, is a creed which enjoins the duty, a duty which is prescribed by Aldous Huxley as follows:

> If individuality is not absolute, if personalities are illusory figments of a self-will disastrously blind to the reality of a more-than-personal consciousness, of which it is the limitation and denial, then all of every human being's efforts must be directed . . . to the actualisation of that more-than-personal consciousness.

The cultivation of this creed and the performance of this duty are tasks for individuals. Groups may, indeed, be formed, since group meditation and recollection assist the practice of mystical technique, but the group must never become an organisation. No Church is here required to organise a worship or to practice a ritual. Indeed, if the mystical view of the universe is correct, the Church is revealed as at best a superfluity, at worst a hindrance. For an organisation and all its works belong to the plane of unreality whereas the object of religion is to focus attention upon reality. Just as Federal Union will, if successful, supersede the nation State, so the new mysticism will eliminate the Church.

C. E. M. JOAD

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mrs. Cicely A. Watling.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

As an Englishman and a Christian I was sickened, as I am sure thousands of others would be, to read of the Sunday football match played by our men in France, and still more of our presumably Christian B.B.C. not merely condoning it but encouraging this display of moral weakness on the part of our English soldiers at a time when they have such a grand opportunity to witness to their French brothers of that faith which more than anything else has made England the power she has been for good in the world.—Letter in *Sheffield Telegraph and Independent*.

Is Hitler really sexless? What does he do in his private life? What does he eat and drink? What are his vices? All his private life is laid bare by this pretty girl.—Advt. in *Sunday Times*.

American cars can hardly be said to be growing in beauty, and their preference for an aggressive type of "nose" or bonnet, comparable to a railway locomotive minus its funnel, is hard to justify. It imparts to the car an aggressive appearance, difficult to harmonise with democratic ideas.—R. E. Davidson in *The New Statesman and Nation*.

Of the four great tragedies of Shakespeare I prefer Macbeth, in whose character there were germs of good. I cannot forgive Hamlet for his caddish behaviour to Ophelia.—Dean Inge in *Evening Standard*.

Particular interest is already being displayed in the third meeting (of the Glenidding Methodist Church) fixed for 15th February, when the subject for discussion will be: "What will hell be like?"—*Cumberland and Westmorland Herald*.

DEAD MEN'S SHOES

It resolves itself into a question of supply and demand. The unforeseen lull in the opening stages of the war has not created the anticipated demand. We have not had long lists of casualties leaving serious gaps in the commissioned ranks . . . hence discontent amongst officer reserves at home.—War Office Departmental Chief, *Daily Telegraph*, February 12th.

WHEN the gallant ex-officer craves a commission
And meets with a frigid official response,
It means that the war of blockade and attrition
Has no need of his gallantry just for the nonce.
The lag has a perfectly logical reason,
It is merely a case of demand and supplies—
The cannon refusing their fodder this season
The looked-for emergency does not arise.

The War on the West Front is one of those gambles,
With no one proposing the slightest advance,
But until the whole line is a bit of a shambles
There's not even standing-room "somewhere in France."
Every foot of the front is successfully guarded,
Inaction proceeds in a regular groove,
But the call to Reservists is *pro tem* retarded
Till someone shows symptoms of making a move.

So ex-heroes, debarred from the theatre of action,
Mope far from the scenes where the battle should be
Where visiting War Lords express satisfaction
And bugles are blowing for ENSA and tea.
Their rush to the Colours is brusquely arrested
By the widespread release of the War Office sign—
Allied field of glory completely congested,
No vacancies left in the Maginot Line.

SAGITTARIUS

FREE

FEW people can have read of the boarding of the *Altmark* and the rescue of the imprisoned seamen without a sense of breathing a freer air in consequence. Say what we will, there are few things more charming than freedom. All the platitudes cannot dull it. It has survived some of the worst oratory in the world as well as some of the worst poetry. Men without freedom go on dying for it, and men with freedom go on dying in aid of the men without freedom. Boys in their teens think their lives well lost in its cause. More precious blood has been shed for freedom than for any other secular end. And the curious thing is, nobody knows what it is. Nobody can define it. Those who love it differ about its meaning to the point of mutual hatred.

It is easy to imagine that, at the moment of their release, the men rescued from the *Altmark* had a sense of absolute freedom. For them it was night turned into day, servitude into triumph. If an argumentative moralist had approached them just then and attempted to prove to them that they were not really free, they would have felt in their happiness like throwing him overboard. "My friends," he might have said, "your feeling that you are free is an illusion. Few of us are free—none of us, indeed, till we have got rid of the common passions of mankind—till we have become incapable of hatred or anger, indifferent to pleasure and pain, contemptuous alike of appetites and possessions. How many of you," he might have gone on, "are not already experiencing a craving for alcohol or nicotine, which no doubt you will indulge at the earliest possible moment? No man is free," he might have concluded, with an admonition from his forefinger, "who is a slave to alcohol and nicotine." At such a time, moralising about freedom in this fashion would have seemed irrelevant. The men knew that for all purposes that mattered at the moment they were free. The freedom that had been lost was found, and, whatever the moralist might say, there was cause for rejoicing.

And, if the moralist had been succeeded by an enthusiastic Communist who chose that particular occasion to point out to the seamen that it was no use their thinking themselves free so long as they were not economically free, I doubt whether the argument would have had a better reception. When a man is rejoicing over his good fortune, it is no time to remind him of his misfortunes. On the day of his marriage the lover with only two pounds a week does not want his best man to keep reminding him that he is a wage-slave. Even a poor man must be occasionally allowed to be happy. Most of the soldiers who were set free when Roberts relieved Kandahar were poor men, earning a shilling a day, but, when the forces under Roberts arrived to rescue them, they would not have changed places with peers of the realm. They were for the moment, as the saying is, on top of the world. There was a phrase current among the Victorian not rich in their happy moments: "I wouldn't call the Queen my aunt." None of those soldiers just then would have called the Queen his aunt. I knew one of them in my childhood, and he used to tell me how he and his comrades wept for joy as they heard the music of freedom approaching. They could not have defined freedom, but they knew in that hour what freedom was.

There are those who tell us that freedom is an illusion since we do not possess even freedom of will. We may leave them to their arguments, however. We know in our bones that for all common purposes there is a vast difference between being free and not being free. The slave knows it. Even though freedom may be only the door into a new kind of servitude, the new servitude is nearer freedom than the old. It is servitude with the taste of freedom, and that is something. Hence there is no need for cynicism as we read stories of the rejoicings of runaway slaves escaping in the old days into the freedom of the northern States. All freedom is relative, and, though such limited freedom might mean little enough to you and me, it was to the slave a rescue from the darkness of a pit into the light of the sun. If you live under the threat of the lash, even freedom from the threat of the lash seems like a step into Paradise. Freedom means largely being freer than one was before. Hence a slave in the middle of the nineteenth century rejoiced over a modicum of freedom that would seem slavery to an American artisan of the present time.

To-day one of the chief dangers to freedom is our inability to agree as to what kind of freedom is best for mankind, or rather our tendency to concentrate on one kind of freedom and believe that this is the only kind. We have become specialists, some of us specialising in national freedom, some in democratic freedom, some in economic freedom, and some in personal freedom. It is a common enough thing to find men who would give their lives for national freedom caring nothing for democratic or economic freedom. Some of the noblest patriots have been bitter enemies of social reform. It is sometimes maintained that men like this are not genuine patriots and that in fighting for their country they are merely fighting for their class interests; but I think that to say this is to misunderstand the muddled nature of mankind. Men have a natural love of their country whether it has endowed them with riches or with poverty. To live in a country under the trampling of a foreign army is an abasement to labourer and master alike. The Irish peasant in Mayo living in the same room with his cow and hens felt this. It was an Irish navvy that I heard singing:

A felon's cap's the noblest crown
An Irishman can wear.

The Irish fight, no doubt, for their land as well as for their country, but it was of their country they made their songs.

There are people to-day who tell us that national freedom is not worth having—that it stands in the way of a World State—and that little nations are little nuisances. I will admit the possibility of the slow formation of a World State, but even when it is formed I think national patriotism will survive as it has survived among the three nations that inhabit the small island of Great Britain. Meanwhile, those who defend national freedom do so in order to protect mankind, not against the blessings of a World State, but against the disaster of Imperialist tyranny. That may not be their conscious motive but it is what they are doing. They, like the abolitionists, have advanced the bounds of human freedom. Let those who despise national freedom put themselves in the place of the conquered Poles.

In recent years, perhaps, even commoner than the contempt for national freedom has become the contempt for democratic freedom. I do not mean that this contempt is widespread, but the small minority that professes it has become increasingly articulate. All the freedoms that men in the democratic countries have won through generations of bitter struggle—freedom of election, freedom to oppose the Government, freedom of speech, freedom of the judiciary, freedom to strike—are declared to be so illusory as, in the absence of economic freedom, to be scarcely worth having. I happen to believe

in economic freedom, but it seems to me to be a queer kind of fanaticism to want to make men economically free and in other respects slaves. I would rather be free and exploited by a capitalist than a slave and exploited by the State. And the absurd thing is that there is no need to divorce economic freedom in this way from national and democratic and personal freedom. Economic freedom is the logical next step after universal suffrage. A man need not cease to be a patriot and a democrat in order to believe in it. In fact, unless he is a patriot and a democrat I doubt whether it is worth believing in. Economic freedom was undoubtedly a step forward in undemocratic Russia, but, if the other forms of freedom were sacrificed, economic freedom of the Russian kind would be a step backward in England.

The ideal temper of a democracy, it seems to me, is that of men who know and treasure the freedom they possess and who at the same time have a clear vision of freedom yet to be won. To be content with the achievements of the past is to endanger freedom by becoming a Conservative: to forget the achievements of the past is to endanger freedom by becoming a doctrinaire. Man, the philosophers tell us, will never be more than relatively free, whatever happens; but how few things there are more desirable than that relative freedom which we already possess and that relative freedom which still exists only in the dreams of men! Y. Y.

Miscellany

THE HOLE

THEY say that in Western Europe watches and clocks are very cheap indeed. In fact I've heard that in some countries they give them away for nothing.

I calculate that at our official rate of exchange a wrist watch there would cost only forty-eight kopecks in Soviet currency. Isn't that wonderful?

Here, of course, you cannot buy as much as a minute hand for forty-eight kopecks. It is a bad state of affairs, in my opinion.

On the other hand, it may not really be a bad state of affairs. After all, we do not know what tasks our Government Trust of Exact Mechanics are occupying themselves with. Maybe they have some grandiose tasks which we simply cannot imagine. Perhaps they are busy inventing marvellous weighing machines, or pills for headaches, or what not. It is difficult for us to know.

But whatever they do, they certainly are not making watches. Obviously they cannot be bothered with such trivial fiddling little things.

You can always prove that a watch is not so very important in our sort of life. Even I would be inclined to agree. In the daytime, you might say a watch is quite unnecessary. A sort of superfluous ballast which would only make your trouser pockets sag.

It is quite easy to tell when to knock off work without a watch. As for going to bed, again you don't need a watch for that. You can tell dinner-time by your appetite, and if you have enough money, why not eat whenever you feel like eating? But there is one occasion when the watch is rather important, that is, in the morning when you have to get up to go to work. To get up without a watch, friends, is not as simple as it seems, I must admit.

Of course, you might ask the time from a neighbour, or run across to the railway station to look at the clock. But neither of these tricks is as easy as it looks. Your neighbour might have no watch just the same as yourself.

My neighbour, for instance, gets up when I do. And I get up when he gets up, or when my landlady begins to rise. But, unfortunately, my landlady does not always begin to rise at the same time. She has rheumatoid arthritis, and it sometimes happens that she does not get out of bed for five days on end. How can you tell the right time in such circumstances?

Honestly, although I don't want to grumble, I must confess that it is a bad thing to be without a watch.

The main trouble is that it often makes me late at my work. The other day they told me quite plainly at the office: "Try to be more punctual, Comrade, or there'll be trouble."

Naturally, I am trying, which means that I get up at cockcrow. It is easier in the summer because to some extent I am helped by the sun.

There's a large crack in the floor of my room close to the stove, a crack of unknown origin. And when the sunlight from the window gets as far as that hole, then I know it is five minutes to seven, and time for me to get up.

However, even the sun, this very punctual planet, let me down a few weeks ago.

One morning I tore my head off my pillow to look at the hole and saw that sunlight was still some distance from it. Obviously it was only about half-past-six. And I could go to sleep again for another half-hour.

So I went to sleep for half an hour. Then I got up leisurely and went to my work at a quiet pace. And there they looked askance at me. "You're late again, Comrade."

At first I refused to believe it. "No, I'm not," I said. It's impossible." "Yes," they say, "you're twenty minutes late." "But how, friends?" I said. "I simply cannot understand this. I'm completely muddled."

"Perhaps your watch is late," said the manager.

"Yes, of course, my watch!" said I. "My hole is late, not my watch." And I explained to him the way I told the time.

"It's an old trick," said he. "I myself got up for a long time by a nail in the ceiling. Then the ceiling sank. In your case it must be the whole house that's sinking."

Although the house itself was not sinking, it came out afterwards that the floor had sunk somewhat, on account of dry-rot. Dry-rot destroyed one of the supports, and for that reason my crack changed its position. Now I shall have to use some mark on the wall to get up by.

However, as far as the rest of our affairs is concerned, everything is all right, thank God. Business is attended to in the offices, letters are written and mailed off. All sorts of new gadgets are being invented. Perhaps some time soon they will start making watches, too. Labour and patience will triumph in the end. MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO

(Translated by Elisaveta Fen.)

PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS

RUMBLING under blackened girders, Midland, bound for Cricklewood,
Puffed its sulphur to the sunset where that Land of Laundries stood.
Rumble under, thunder over, train and tram alternate go,
Shake the floor and smudge the ledger, Charrington, Sells, Dale and Co.,
Nuts and nuggets in the window, trucks along the lines below.

When the Bon Marché was shuttered, when the feet were hot and tired,
Outside Charrington's we waited, by the "STOP HERE IF REQUIRED";
Launched aboard the shopping basket, sat precipitately down,
Rocked past Zwanziger the Baker's, and the terrace blackish brown,
And the Anglo, Anglo-Norman Parish Church of Kentish Town,

Till the tram went over thirty, sighting terminus again,
Past municipal lawn tennis and the bobble-hanging plane.
Soft the light suburban evening caught our ashlar-speckled spire,
Eighteen-sixty Early English, as the mighty elms retire
Either side of Brookfield Mansions flashing fine French-window fire.

Oh the after tram-ride quiet, when we heard, a mile beyond,
Silver music from the bandstand, barking dogs by Highgate Pond.
Up the hill where stucco houses in Virginia creeper drown;
And my childish wave of pity, seeing children carrying down
Sheaves of drooping dandelions to the courts of Kentish Town.

JOHN BETJEMAN

THE MOVIES

"Ninotchka," at the Empire
"The Roaring Twenties," at the Warner Theatre

Ernst Lubitsch could hardly have supposed, while directing *Ninotchka*, that this amusing comedy of Red Russians in Paris would rouse ideological passions. That hisses and a few counter-cheers should greet a portrait of Stalin, and that in one cinema a member of the audience who applauded during the hissing should be threatened with a punch on the nose by an angry army officer, was certainly not Mr. Lubitsch's intention. *Ninotchka* was filmed before the Finnish war, even before the Russo-German non-aggression pact, at which happy period the tolerant, almost benign, criticism levelled at the Soviet Union would have appealed to all but the staunchest party liners as a very funny joke. The chief merit of Mr. Lubitsch is that he takes nothing seriously: his Red Russians are no exception. He has classified them as he does nearly all his characters—his Frenchmen wear pointed beards, pointed shoes, and are very excitable—his White Russians are all titled and crazy—and now his Red Russians are superficially materialistic, but fundamentally human and childlike. Having determined the main characteristics of the Red Russian, the course which the film will follow is clear. Red Russians who come to Paris become so impressed with the wonders of Capitalist Democracy, that like children with a new toy they are unable to stop playing (the analogy leads to an interesting speculation—would they, like children, become bored with the new toy if the film continued long enough?). With such a simple and superficial idea as the central theme, with Greta Garbo as a special Soviet emissary sent to check up on the activities of three very funny comedians who represent a Soviet trade delegation in Paris, and with typical Lubitsch direction, it is really very humourless to regard this as anything but a straight comedy. Lubitsch is at his best when the action of the film takes place in Paris: the Trade Delegation installing itself in the rococo Royal Suite of a luxury hotel: Garbo being gradually changed from a cold materialist into a young woman in love by the sophisticated blandishments of Melvyn Douglas, are perfect material for him. The sequences in Moscow might be delicate to handle; over-crowding is notoriously one of the worst features of that city. But Lubitsch treats it as wittily as Zosschenko, and the scene in the communal room which Garbo shares with a cellist and a tram driver is one of the funniest in the film. Although Ninotchka is advertised as Miss Garbo's first comedy role, her performance is not very different from her usual. As, most of the time, one is laughing at, rather than with her, she is not called upon to display any particular talents as a comedian. Two scenes in which she appears first as unemotional and with a purely biological outlook on sex and then as a woman made suddenly conscious of love, give her the opportunity of displaying her remarkable restraint and power as an actress, and also of looking very beautiful. She plays a tipsy scene with charm, and laughs at great length, with conviction. If one is a Garbo addict, one will be entranced with her performance, but *Ninotchka* certainly does not present a new Garbo. Ina Clare gives a highly original performance in a very unoriginal role—the hard, sophisticated Grand Duchess Swana. Melvyn Douglas paints a pleasant portrait of aristocratic seductiveness. The dialogue is at moments very funny, but the film is chiefly remarkable for the delicacy of the Lubitsch direction.

The Roaring Twenties has failed to make the most of a good idea; a caption at the beginning of the film tells us that we are about to see an exposure of the mad hysterical post-war years in New York based on a book by a well-known journalist, Mark Hellinger, who states that the story is authentic and founded on fact. After this, one expects something in the way of a new disclosure about the twenties, and cannot help being disappointed with a familiar tale of bootleggers and gangsters (though a very good one), with a certain amount of montage tracing the history of the twenties fitted in. It is even more disappointing when the film with patent non-interventionist bias, opens with a war sequence, blaming Humphrey Bogart's subsequent career of violence on his having been given a gun. (Far more Frenchmen handled guns in the last war than Americans, yet Paris never became a Cicero.) It takes post-war unemployment and prohibition to drive James Cagney to crime; but it is not long before we have two of filmland's best gangsters running a hooch racket together. It is very pleasing to see James Cagney in this familiar part of his, the tough guy with the heart of gold. Priscilla Lane provides love interest and sings some of the twenties' tunes in a pretty voice. Twenties' dresses, twenties' hair styles, and twenties' tunes provide amusing interludes between the shootings. All very pleasant, but obviously the twenties can yield a more original story than this.

ANTHONY BOWER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Venetian," at the St. Martin's

It is difficult to understand why Mr. Bax ever harnessed his considerable dramatic talents to so unsuitable a vehicle. This lurid story of lust, ambition and Nemesis in Renaissance Florence would admirably have suited an Elizabethan or even Sam Goldwyn, but to treat it, like Mr. Bax, as though it were a human drama in an outer suburb is deliberately to invite the failure that the play unfortunately achieves. "Francesco," exclaims the Grand Duchess Bianca at an emotional high spot, "I never realised till this moment how queer life is!" "Cheerio!" cries one noble Florentine to another. In spite of Miss McArthur's tasteful period decor we remain unconvinced, and feel that beyond the pillared portico lies the High Street of Penge. The play, it is true, has some good moments, all of them when Mr. Cooper's wicked Cardinal is on the stage; and in the modern middle-class setting to which the dialogue and characterisation really belong some of the passages might have been genuinely moving. Even as things are, much could have been done by more imaginative casting. Miss Sylvia Coleridge has many talents, but to ask her to portray the ruthless passions and ambitions of an Italianate grand lady is wholly to misunderstand them. Mr. Wilfrid Walter, too, is an able actor in his own metier, but he is, to say the least, quite the last person to interpret the murky obsessions of an introspective Medici Prince. Some of the smaller parts were well done, and Mr. Gerald Cooper gave, as already mentioned, a performance of a polish and suavity that shone out like a wicked deed in a milk-and-water world. *The Venetian* is amusing, but it is not historical drama; and the Italy it displays is far less credible than the sea-coast of Bohemia.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, February 24th—
London Scots Lunch, Gatti's Restaurant, Strand, 1.30.
Federal Union Demonstration. Speakers: W. B. Curry, Barbara Wootton, and Charles Kimber, Queen's Hall, 8.

SUNDAY, February 25th—
J. McCabe: "Mr. Wells's New World Order," Conway Hall, 11.
John Lewis: "The Russian Enigma," 153 Finchley Road, 11.
Karel Capek Society performance of scenes from his plays, Rudolf Steiner Hall, 7.30. Till Friday.

MONDAY, February 26th—
Sir Richard Livingstone: "The Democratic Ideal," Morley College, 6.30.
Charlotte Haldane: "China," 21 Willow Road, N.W.3, 8.30.

TUESDAY, February 27th—
W. Maude Brayshaw: "Men, Women—and World Peace," Friends House, 1.20.
Hermann Mannheim: "War and Crime," Canterbury Hall, Cartwright Gardens, W.C.1, 5. And on March 5th and 12th.
London Philharmonic Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 7.

WEDNESDAY, February 28th—
Sir Eric Maclagan: "Sculpture," Birkbeck College, 1.15.
P. L. Yates: "Socialist Economics," Dick Sheppard Centre, 8.

THURSDAY, February 29th—
Sir Frederick Keeble: "Plant Hormones," Royal Inst., 3. And on March 7th and 14th.
Hermann Mannheim: "Social Aspects of Crime and Delinquency," I.S.T.D., 8 Portman Street., 6.30. And on March 7th and 14th.

FRIDAY, March 1st—
Lunch-time Concert, Louis Kentner, pianist, Birkbeck College, 1.
Rt. Hon. C. Attlee: "Approaches to Peace," Canterbury Hall, 5.
H. Pevsner: "Art and the Reformation," Birkbeck College, 5.30.
Fabian Nursery: "Fascism in Britain," 11 Dartmouth Street, 6.30.
Jack Chen: "A Chinese Artist Works in Moscow," National Hotel, 7.30. Tickets 6d. from S.C.R.
"Murder in the Cathedral," Mercury.

Correspondence

FUTURE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SIR,—The discussion of the position of the Czechoslovak National Committee in your columns raises questions of a wider significance. Can this Committee exercise authority over the Sudeten German or Hungarian exiles who were Czechoslovak citizens before Munich? Is it the task of the Committee to work for the liberation of Czechs and Slovaks or for the restoration of the old Czechoslovakia including three million Sudeten Germans and other minorities? Such questions lead us to the fundamental problem, in what form and on what principles is Central Europe to be reorganised after this war. On this issue I wish to state certain propositions from the point of view of the largest democratic party in the Sudeten district.

The Munich agreement brought the legal incorporation of the Sudeten district in Germany. Formally this agreement is still in force, but there are some new facts to notice. Hitler has not respected the independence of the post-Munich Czechoslovakia. The short history of the Protectorate and the secession of Slovakia prove that a State of Czechs and Slovaks could not exist within the Munich frontiers. Representatives of the Czechs argue that Hitler, by his march into Prague, tore up the Munich agreement.

From the point of view of Sudeten German democrats, the positions would seem to be as follows: The Munich agreement was signed against our will: we have never recognised it as binding. On the other hand we have never accepted the pre-Munich position as a final solution of the Sudeten problem. Our slogan has always been, "Equality of rights for all: predominance for none." We have fought against the imperialist predominance of the Nazis over eight million Czechs; we cannot now become automatically the advocates of a new predominance of Czechs and Slovaks over the Sudeten Germans. Furthermore we cannot, while in exile, make decisions about the future of the Sudeten districts.

The developments in these districts is highly satisfactory. The Nazi supporters are rapidly becoming disillusioned: the initial reduction of unemployment is now being replaced by a new depression: a large part of the export industry is being ruined by the Nazi war economy: shortage of raw materials is producing short-time. Every day the prestige of Henlein's opponents grows, and the Henleiners mutter, "We only wanted autonomy."

But this revived opposition to the Nazis does not mean that there is a desire to return to the pre-Munich situation. Even staunch opponents of the Nazis fear that the Sudeten Germans might become, after the war, the objects of Czech revenge. But the readiness for a solution of the problem along the lines of autonomy is growing among the Sudeten Germans; and it may well be that the Sudeten problem is the key to a Federal solution of the whole Central European problem. If the wishes of the Sudeten Germans are considered, they will never accept a position inferior to that of the Slovaks. Indeed, European peace demands that three million Germans, close to the frontiers of Germany, should not again be given a secondary status.

The history of our friendship for the democratic masses of the Czech people is written in blood and tears. We feel the shame of their oppression as deeply as any, especially when we recall the role played by a Sudeten German, K. H. Frank. But we cannot for this reason adopt a purely pro-Czech attitude here abroad, any more than we did at home. In the interests of democracy in the Sudeten area we must remain entirely independent in our relations with the National Committee, while completely sympathising with it. We must see what ideas of the new political order the Czech representatives abroad develop. We shall find it difficult if they base their claims for the pre-Munich frontiers on purely historical, strategic and economic grounds. How much easier it would be if in due course they invited us to join in refounding the State on democratic principles!

While these questions are still unsettled, we must give Sudeten Germans abroad the choice of volunteering either in the British or the Czech army. We are sure, especially when we recall their moderation in national questions, that the Czech Socialists, who have done so much in the struggle for independence, will not remain permanently unrepresented on the National Committee. That they should be represented would facilitate a provisional understanding with the Sudeten German democrats.

WENZEL JAKSCH,
London Representative of the Sudeten German Social Democratic Party.

"MUST THE WAR SPREAD?"

SIR,—In your most interesting discussion of Mr. Pritt's views you point out, in commenting on the use he makes of Canning's defence of his treatment of Denmark and of Joseph Chamberlain's defence of the Boer War, that international law has been modified since those events by the creation of the League and the solemn declarations of Governments, including the Soviet Government.

It is perhaps worth while to mention another fact about those cases. Chamberlain's policy was condemned by a great body of British opinion, led by such men as C. B., Morley, Bryce, Harcourt, Spencer, Ripon, Lloyd George and Burns. Canning's policy was condemned by several leading statesmen, including so warlike a Whig as Grenville.

Have any voices been raised in Russia against the invasion of Finland and, if so, what has happened to them?

Manchester. J. L. HAMMOND

SIR,—I read with interest in your issue of last week a review of my recent book, *Must the War Spread?* I would not, of course, presume to take up your space criticising or answering it, but I did miss one thing—the signature which in your general tradition invariably comes at the end of a review. *Do* tell me, whose courage failed him and why? D. N. PRITT

2 Pump Court, Temple, E.C.4.

[The review was not signed because it represented the views of the *N.S. & N.* and not merely those of a reviewer.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—In view of the hard things you say about Sir John Simon in your review of Mr. Pritt's book, I think it only right that I—whose happiest days were spent in Sir John's chambers and who knows what his power of friendship can mean to a young barrister—should tell you what my old schoolfellow, Tom Spring-Rice (that gifted diplomatist who thought it his duty to throw up a fine career and go and do his duty to his country in Ireland when his father's death made him Monteagle) said to me when he was dining with me here a few months before his death:

"I only came across Simon once. That was when he came out to Geneva to represent England in the Anglo-Persian Oil dispute which we had referred to the League. Before he came not only were they all against us, but the atmosphere was one of sullen hostility. He came: and he cleared the whole atmosphere. He charmed everybody and he got a unanimous award."

Reform Club, S.W.1. HUMPHREY LANE

SCIENCE IN THE U.S.S.R.

SIR,—The correspondence in your columns has already sufficed to show that science in the Soviet Union needs to be taken seriously. In many fields it has made notable advances, in all there is a growing body of research and application. It is easy to allege deficiencies in quality in some specialised work that requires long tradition; but everyone who has worked, as I have, in the laboratories knows the difficulties which the young Soviet science had to face. The keenness of the workers and the wideness of their outlook, the sound and thorough training which the new generation is going through, are guarantees of a future that will silence all cavil.

In physics, for instance, there are already more papers published in the Soviet Union, and good ones too, than in any country except the United States and England. And yet after the revolution there were only seventy trained physicists in the Union against the thousands in those countries. What had to be done in the period of reconstruction was a triple task: to create a solid and active body of scientific research linked closely to industry, agriculture, and health services, to build up a universal system of scientific education, and to make science the property of all the people and not of a privileged few. The errors and the crudities of Soviet science of that period were inevitable, but for the most part they were valuable and salutary errors. Valuable because they proceeded from excess of imagination and originality, unchecked by the critical sterility of academic science, salutary because in learning their mistakes Soviet scientists are building their own positive critical apparatus.

The detractors of Soviet science are, however, not really concerned with standards of scholarship. They dislike it not because it does not come up to their expectations, but for another and far more fundamental reason. Science in the Soviet Union means something different from what it means in this country. There it is an integral part of social life and neither an elegant pastime nor

a cheap source of profit. The real basis of objection is that in the Soviet Union science is organised as a part of the productive scheme and that this organisation is conscious and in accord with the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

Organised science is anathema to a number of older academic scientists and yet even they will admit that practically the whole of the great advances of science in the twentieth century was achieved not by scientists working as individuals but in organised groups. It is only when we come to the organisation of science on a large scale that the objections arise. Those objections are not intrinsically scientific at all. They appear because any widely conceived scheme for scientific advance comes straight up against the vested interests, commercial and political, of the rulers of our Western civilisation. The present inefficiency and waste of intelligence can be excused by their apologists only by the plea of academic freedom. But this is mere cant; any young scientist in precarious receipt of short term grants or safely controlled in a government department or monopoly research laboratory knows exactly how much his academic freedom is worth.

The apparent absence of philosophy in Western civilisation and the relegation of official philosophy to ingenious exercises in grammar and mathematics is admirably suited to prevent scientists ever thinking out where they stand or what is the result of their work. These mental blinkers are not, it is true, imposed by law but by a custom and tradition that has until recently been far more effective. Marxism does point the way to a universe which makes sense and in which the individual scientist can find his place as a creator and not merely as a contemplative observer. Dialectical materialism is not a rigid orthodoxy, it is a live and flexible weapon of thought and the real obscurantists are those who are so frightened of it that they dare not study it for themselves. It is the basis of scientific teaching in the Soviet Union, just as Newtonian and not Aristotelian physics is the basis of Physics teaching in this country. It is, however, simply untrue to say that it is a doctrine imposed on men of science. I remember hearing as far back as 1932 an eminent physicist at a meeting of the Marx Engels Institute saying that he saw no application of dialectical materialism to physics. This led to a violent argument but nothing worse, and, I might add, he now occupies a higher post than he did then.

I deplore the lack of contact that has come about between scientists in the Soviet Union and this country. In this, however, I do not feel their loss as much as our own. Our scientific labours are contained in the publications of our learned societies which they can and do read, but theirs are to be found far more in the building of a new society which has to be experienced to be known.

Birkbeck College, London, E.C.4. J. D. BERNAL

SIR,—Sir Charles Trevelyan has written to you in the interest of truth, criticising Professor A. V. Hill's account of Kapitza's detention in Russia by the authorities there. He met Kapitza in Moscow, he tells us, last July; if there was any "kidnapping" of Kapitza from Cambridge, Sir Charles is "quite sure he is not aware of it: he is honoured, well supplied and content in the U.S.S.R.: nothing would induce Kapitza to return to England in permanence."

I had a very special meeting with Kapitza in Leningrad in October, 1934—that is, soon after he was refused his passport to return, if only temporarily, to his Cambridge laboratory, as he had, I understand, returned more than once before then.

I believe it can hurt nobody now, and it may clear the matter up, if I say that my object in seeing Kapitza was to ascertain if he would object to my asking a certain Soviet Minister with whom I stayed while in Russia (he is no longer in the limelight) whether the ban might not be removed in deference to the wishes of Cambridge colleagues and Kapitza s own solemn pledge of return to Russia. If ever a man wanted to go from Russia to Cambridge at that date, that man was Kapitza. He was, however, far too nervous and too loyal to associate himself with my request, which was accordingly made without involving him, though with his consent on this condition.

My old and valued friend, the Minister, smiled his shrewd smile as he refused. "All very fine," he said, "but *we* do not believe that Kapitza, once he got back to Cambridge, would ever want to come back here, or anyhow if he didn't we couldn't compel him. We badly need our good scientists just now. Why not send us a few good English scientists instead of asking us to take any chance of losing one of our own to England?" At that time Russia felt herself in peril from Japan. I found the answer characteristic and incontrovertible.

No doubt Kapitza is honoured and useful in Russia to-day. Possibly, after more than five years, he prefers permanent residence there to permanent residence in England. This does not mean that he relished the cancellation of his passport or the disbelief in his word. "Kidnapping" and forcible detention are not identical terms, but upon occasion they may have similar effects. Friends of the Soviet Union must accept the fact that freedom of movement and confidence in a man's integrity are not there regarded as considerable when policy is in question.

35 Gloucester Crescent, N.W.1. CATHERINE CARSWELL

ELECTORAL TRUCE

SIR,—Mr. George Jeger has apparently misread my letter. The simple fact I sought to point out was that if we fight by-elections on the basis that the Chamberlain Government is not to be trusted to prosecute the war in an efficient manner, we should, logically, be prepared to say that we are ready to show by deeds how this task should be carried out. To adopt an attitude of saying that the present Government cannot do the job, but we will not undertake it, would hardly commend itself to reasonable people. We cannot just tell the electors that the Chamberlain Government is weak and incompetent and ought to go, and leave the matter there. They will be entitled to ask for some constructive alternative.

Mr. Jeger's answer is that we should proclaim our readiness to form a Labour Government which would conduct the war more effectively. So be it. But surely this involves a demand for a General Election, and not merely for fighting by-elections. Let us be realists. Since Parliament is at present composed of an overwhelming majority of Tory Members a Government composed exclusively of Labour Members is out of the question. Only a General Election could effectively alter this situation, for even if we won by-election after by-election the "damned compact majority" would still be there.

Nothing in my letter suggested that I thought we ought to join the Chamberlain Government. But let us face the plain fact that if we cannot have a General Election while the war is in progress the only alternative to the Chamberlain Government is another Government which could command the support of the present House of Commons. And this House, as I have pointed out, is overwhelmingly Tory in character. I cannot believe that even in wartime the Tory leopard has so changed his spots that he is ready to be at the service of a Labour Government.

We can, I think, all agree that the present situation is a difficult one for the Labour Party, and no ideal solution of it is available. I submit, however, that if we hope to obtain, as we all do, the confidence and support of the majority of the people, we must be careful, in these grave times, to advocate only policies which can be defended as being logical and constructive in character.

ERNEST THURTLE

PLASTIC FOR LENSES

SIR,—The busy reader-in-the-train can best judge the accuracy of his press by the way in which it deals with his own business, or sphere of special knowledge. This process is to Sociology what Microscopy is to Science. The daily press, of course, makes an appalling showing: one expects something better from THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Take Mr. Ritchie Calder's article as an example: I imagined this was fairly good, and certainly important, but unfortunately it happens to include Ophthalmics, of which I have some knowledge. Lenses of plastic material are not, in this country, a suppressed invention. On the contrary, a large amount of capital (for so small an industry) has gone into their development and exploitation. So far nothing of any size has emerged. To date, the moulded lens is of a quality that would be rejected by any but the most indifferent of manufacturing houses. It is soft compared with glass and thus loses its surface under the constant rubbing to which spectacle lenses are subject. The design and quality of glass ophthalmic lenses supplied by qualified opticians is far in advance of public discrimination; although, it might be added, the tendency of Government intervention, through the medium of the Benefit Societies, is to encourage the use of inferior lenses. On the other hand, it is quite possible to obtain them at 1½*d.* each, the hypothetical price of plastic lenses, and they are of corresponding quality.

In the case of optical instruments at least two different sorts of

glass (or plastic) are needed to meet the lowest requirements of lens design. These are not available in plastic. Finally the number of moulds required to cover the existing range of ophthalmic lenses would be at least in the order of millions. But crude moulding, as for windows and light fittings, and fine moulding to a limited range of curves—as in the case of contact lenses—are being fully explored and exploited.

I disbelieve in the efficiency of capitalism and it pains me to admit all this. But it is so. If anything, private enterprise is too ready to exploit any invention, however shallow. No doubt the situation is similar in other industries. Maybe this seems a narrow issue, but technical ignorance, sloppiness or indifference on the part of Progressives and Planners (so often typified by their abominable spectacles) is so common that the matter is really symptomatic of a serious condition. Serious, because, after all, it is a technological civilisation that they seek to plan. Unless, then, they can solve the problem of mating technical and social efficiency they might as well pack up. JOHN D. SPOONER

Amersham.

[Mr. Ritchie Calder writes: "It is encouraging to know that money is being spent in the development of plastic lenses. While it is true that the basic plastic is soft; surface treatment can be used to overcome that. The delicate (and expensive) contact lenses, fitted over the eyeball itself, are, as he says, being made in plastics. The question is implicit in this letter, Is cheapness the difficulty of the ophthalmists? Would it not be, from the oculist's point of view, better to cheapen lenses and change them often?"—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

LOST LEADERS?

SIR,—

How valiant is the Grub Street heart!
Look, Stranger, how the scribblers start
In warlike zeal to trounce the Two
Who said Goodbye to London too!
Courage they lacked? But some may say
It was their legend failed, not they;
It needed courage to deny
The baulked appeasers' battle-cry,
And after Munich to confess
No good could come of Europe's mess,
To brave the Headline Seers who hate
All young men knocking at *their* gate.
And some who slyly take the chance
Of gibes to aid their own advance,
To choose the exile's bitter part,
And risk their fame to save their art.

J. L.

RUMANIA'S MINORITIES

SIR,—May I supplement the letter in last week's issue by M. Agarbiceanu on this subject? The percentages you gave for the three main elements in the population of the whole area ceded by Hungary to Rumania (Rumanians, 43; Hungarians, 35; Saxons, 11) agree with those given by George Lucacs in the semi-official publication, *Justice for Hungary*. But in the same book Count Apponyi uses figures that are demonstrably more accurate: Rumanians, 53; Hungarians, 32.7; Germans, 10.7. These are pre-war figures. The most recent figures, showing changes in this population, give the percentage of Rumanians as 58.

As regards the Dobroudja, your statement that the population is "almost solidly Bulgarian" takes too little account of a substantial Turkish minority. TEMESVAR

[We are obliged for the correction. The revised figures strengthen our argument that there is no case for handing over any territory to Hungary—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

THE *DAILY HERALD*

SIR,—Your contributor "Critic" deals, in the issue of February 10th, with a subject which I hope and believe is of considerable interest to your readers: the future of the *Daily Herald*. Unfortunately he attempts to conceal his ignorance of the situation by borrowing the technique of the horoscope-reader and the gossip-writer.

He expects "Cudlipp and Odhams now to go all the way; there will be less 'politics' even in the leading articles." He foresees that "it will be argued that in wartime nothing will be wanted except cheerful, non-critical stuff." And he is pretty sure that the "Rights of Man" controversy will be quietly gagged, bound and dropped overboard.

These sensational prophecies are made without the slightest authority and without any attempt to confirm their substance. The *Daily Herald* is not going "non-political," nor is there any intention that its support of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress, whose organ it is, shall be weakened in the slightest. On the contrary, my aim is that its value to the Labour Movement shall increase.

Your "Critic" appears to have forgotten that it is a principle of fair criticism to withold judgment until one has witnessed the performance. And THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION itself—so fierce a critic of "yellow" journalistic methods—has printed his damaging innuendoes and mis-statements with an irresponsibility worthy of the most hectic "tabloid." PERCY CUDLIPP

Long Acre, W.C.2. Editor *Daily Herald.*

[Critic writes: "I am delighted to have elicited these assurances from Mr. Cudlipp, to whose capacities as a newspaper executive I paid due tribute. But he misses my main point—that the *Daily Herald* is supposed to be the organ of Labour and should in my view have a Socialist editor."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

SPANISH COPPER

SIR,—We regret to note from your editorial comment on our letter of the 14th instant that we have apparently failed to make quite clear the fact that no Rio Tinto ore or copper has gone to Germany. As we stated, deliveries of ore to Germany ceased at the beginning of May, 1939. Deliveries to Italy ceased in July, 1939. No Rio Tinto ore has gone, is going or will go to Germany either directly or indirectly.

The suggestion that Germany has been obtaining supplies of this ore indirectly through Italy is entirely devoid of fact.

Rio Tinto Company, Limited, J. DAVIDSON,
11 Old Jewry, E.C.2. Secretary.

WAR AIMS

SIR,—

If the Allies adopt as their goal
The destruction of Sin as a whole,
And proceed to fulfil
Their Olympian wi[11],
The Almighty will be on the dole.

Travellers' Club. WILLIAM DOUGLAS HOME

NAZI AND COMMUNIST

SIR,—I am obliged to you and Raymond Postgate for his disarmingly flattering review of my *Trials of British Freedom;* but his concluding paragraph conveys a suggestion which I cannot allow to pass unchallenged. I deny flatly and categorically that the Communist International has "made a pact with Nazism." I deny that the Soviet Republic has done any such thing. Would Raymond Postgate allege that the British Government has "made a pact" with French Republicanism? Or French Clericalism?

I, personally, support the line of the Communist International because I agree with it—and not because I am "ordered" to do so, or even because I do not want to fall out, publicly, with old friends.

As to Finland. General Mannerheim said the last word that need be said when at the outbreak of hostilities he said: "We are back where we were in 1918." That exactly is the position. And my sympathies, reinforced by my judgment, are where they were in 1918—*with* the "Red" *against* the "White."

Pomona, North Road, T. A. JACKSON
Three Bridges.

[Postgate writes: (1) Yes, I should say the British Government had "made a pact with French Republicanism" in the sense that it had decided that the present French republican system, as a whole, was so near to it and so sympathetic that it could make an alliance involving close economic co-operation and at need military co-operation. This is just what the Stalinists have done with the Nazis. No lingering hope remains that the Pact was in some way a pretence, as we all wished to believe. (2) It makes me chuckle to see Jackson asking me to accept Mannerheim as a final political authority on Finland. Apart from the difference between intervention in an existing civil war and wanton invasion in time of peace there is one difference which the Baron may not consider important but Jackson must—the Finnish workers are on the other side now. Not even the *Daily Worker* pretends one Finn soldier has deserted to the fake Government at Funnijoki (or wherever it is) and all correspondents, including those of such impeccable antecedents as William Forrest, show their unanimous will to resistance.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

"LE LYS DANS LA VALLÉE"

AMONG the furnishing of the great gloomy house that he planned for Madame Hanska, Balzac was obliged to leave a good many empty spaces. On the naked wall, however, he would inscribe a rectangle and within the rectangle he would chalk up a scribbled note that this space had been reserved for a canvas by Raphael or Guido Reni. There are casual though appreciative readers of the *Comédie Humaine* to whom an expedition through the works of Balzac may have suggested an expedition round that unfinished house. So numerous are the spaces that have not been filled. So often does Balzac, in the excitement and haste of the creative process, merely indicate briefly and crudely what he means to do. So abrupt are the transitions from first- to fifth-rate. It is disconcerting, for example, to move on from the marvellous last chapters of *Les Illusions Perdues* to the wild and clumsy melodrama that comes next in the series. Sinister police spies, ethereal consumptive prostitutes, master criminals of an earthly guile and daring, are sketched in by a *feuilleton*-writer who was also a genius but had no sense of when he ceased to be one and became the other. A certain insensitiveness is apt to accompany tremendous talent. In Balzac that insensitiveness is frequently stupefying.

It is fortunate that the unexpectedness of Balzac's gifts should have been in direct proportion to their incompleteness. Suddenly we come face to face with *Le Lys dans la Vallée*, a story that—dangerous as it usually is to compare two arts as different as writing and painting—recalls a panel picture by some French master of the early Renaissance, given the sentiment and subject-matter of a more troubled age. The effect produced is extraordinarily fresh and clear and brilliant. As in some of his most memorable long short stories, Balzac is content to expend all his genius upon the analysis of a single situation and to allow the interest of that situation to excuse itself. He had reason to feel satisfied when the story was finished. In his dedication he testifies to the pride he took in it, to the pleasure he derived from its elegant workmanship—so unlike the haphazard workmanship of his other books. No artist was ever less of a dilettante; but he was too genuine an artist not to venerate order, though for the most part he saw order as grandeur, and grandeur as magnitude.

In scale and theme, *Le Lys dans la Vallée* is equally limited. Its story—well, that it shares with half a dozen other excellent French novels; for it is concerned with the protracted passion of a very young man for a virtuous but passionate married woman. Later, Flaubert was to spin out such an episode—with what magnificent results!—into two whole volumes. Fromentin was to base *Dominique* on a similar love-affair. In fact, the subject was the common property of an entire generation which regarded disappointment as the badge of the "high-born" spirit, and remembered and regretted the more keenly when it did not enjoy. But *Le Lys dans la Vallée* has not yet "dated"; and, though characteristically—even delightfully—the work of a period, the narrative also exists on a far less impermanent plane. Apart from his somewhat unfortunate expeditions into downright melodrama and his generally disastrous flights into the realms of metaphysical speculation, for Balzac the truly romantic was always the concrete. He loves to situate his personages in a definite place and time, establish their genealogies and fix their incomes. He realises that human beings have two sorts of existence. They have an inner life, but simultaneously they live and express themselves through the material objects—through the houses and furniture and small personal belongings—among which their time is spent. Balzac's "realism" is essentially poetic. It has nothing about it of that dull exhaustive naturalism which appals and overwhelms us in the Goncourts or Zola. He shows us the outer world transfigured and irradiated by its human significance. Thus the little white ancient chateau on the hillside, with its small symmetrical façade and five windows looking south over the silvery Indre, becomes immediately the expression of its mistress's life—isolated, obscure, modest but beautifully ordered. And then, there is the first glimpse of Madame de Mortsauf's drawing room, its panelled walls painted in two shades of grey, the white-and-gold porcelain vases on the mantelpiece, the white curtains and the drab chair-covers plainly edged with green.

The appearance of M. de Mortsauf is cleverly calculated. Here is a life which, as revealed in its outward equipment, might seem to leave no loophole for discord, unhappiness or moral *malaise*. M. de Mortsauf enters; and the illusion dissolves. Years of life abroad as an *émigré* have broken his spirit. It is true that he is still energetic and industrious; but spiritual vitality and physical health have alike deserted him. He is restless, embittered, remorseful, the uneasy husk of a man, a self-tormenting tyrant who preys on his family:

> Agé seulement de quarante-cinq ans, il paraissait approcher de la soixantaine, tant il avait promptement vieilli dans le grand naufrage qui termina le 18e siècle. Le demi-couronne, qui ceignait monastiquement l'arrière de sa tête dégarnie de cheveux, venait mourir aux oreilles en caressant les tempes par des touffes grises mélangées de noir. Son visage rassemblait vaguement à celui d'un loup blanc qui a du sang au museau, car son nez était enflammé comme celui d'un homme dont la vie est altérée dans ses principes, dont l'estomac est affaibli, dont les humeurs sont viciées par d'anciennes maladies. . . . Son oeil clair, jaune et dur, tombait sur vous comme un rayon en hiver, lumineux sans chaleur, inquiet sans pensée, défiant sans objet. Sa bouche etait violente et impérieuse, son menton était droit et long.

Moreover, the two children, on whom he had placed all his hopes, have inherited the debility of his constitution; and the tragedy of life at the chateau of Clochegourde is implicit in the contrast between Madame de Mortsauf, young, healthy, beautiful, and the pinched, impoverished-looking children—idolised by both parents—whom she owes to her husband's sufferings and dissipations when he wandered as a landless exile through the cities of Europe. M. de Mortsauf, who is perpetually aware of the contrast and tortured by a spectacle he cannot escape, finds relief in increasing harshness towards the children's mother. The narrator in the role of humble *soupirant* hovers on the verge of this distracted household.

A story so admirably told does not bear re-telling. Its charm depends in part on the flow of a simple harmonious narrative and the flashes of acute observation by which it is enlivened: in part on the development and parallel prolongation of a number of complementary but opposing themes. Death and life rub shoulders at the chateau of Clochegourde; and Madame de Mortsauf, struggling against the principle of dissolution and decay that she observes in her children and her husband, expends to no purpose the resources of her strength and beauty. Then, there is the conflict engendered by the narrator's love—a passion equally pure and sensual, devoted and selfish, doomed by its own sterility yet sublime in its uselessness. Platonic love is not the easiest subject for any novelist, since it is the essence of such a love that it should drag on and on, without the relief or contrast afforded by physical love-making. Its history, like its pleasures, remains subjective; but, though Balzac's personages are sometimes irritating and though from talk they often descend to delivering speeches, they never lose their shape in the imagination. The effect may be a little absurd; but so is passion itself. Madame de Mortsauf is still a woman in spite of her virtues; and the fact that at the very end of her blameless life she should snatch greedily but ineffectually at the idea of happiness, before relapsing into the attitude of conventional piety, helps to illustrate her career of suffering in its true perspective. She, too, had been voluptuous, passionate, fallible. The measure of her moral triumph is the extent of her misery.

The celestial Venus demands an earthly counterpart. Lady Dudley, with whom Félix takes refuge from his idol's exclusive and exhausting platonism, is one of Balzac's most fascinating minor characters—an odd mixture (stirred up to boiling point over the blaze of the novelist's meridional fancy) of the Ladies Hester Stanhope and Caroline Lamb. She is English—and

that alone says almost everything; her birthplace is the country of violent extremes, boundless eccentricity, huge fortunes, crumbling ghost-ridden castles, crazy Dukes, green tea, whiskey and perpetual fogs. Disturbing ancestral influences seethe through her veins. "*Je suis née dans le Lancashire*" (she exclaims defiantly)—"*pays où les femmes meurent d'amour*"; and she has an artistry in the cultivation of material pleasures that Balzac associated with the Anglo-Saxons:

> Quoi qu'elle fasse ou dise, l'Angleterre est matérialiste. . . . Elle possède au plus haut degré cette science de l'existence qui bonifie les moindres parcelles de la materialité, qui fait que votre pantoufle est la plus exquise pantoufle du monde, qui donne à votre linge une saveur indicible, qui double de cèdre et parfume les commodes; qui verse à l'heure dite un thé suave . . . qui bannit la poussière . . . brosse les murs des caves, polit le marteau de la porte, assouplit les ressorts du carrosse, qui fait de la matière une poulpe nourrissante et cotonneuse, brillante et propre, au sein de laquelle l'âme expire sous la jouissance. . . . Ainsi je connus tout à coup . . . une femme, peut—être unique en son sexe, qui m'enveloppa dans les rets de cet amour renaissant de son agonie, et aux prodigalités duquel j'apportais une continence sevère. . . . La nuit, je pleurais de bonheur; le matin, je pleurais de remords. . . .

Yet, though Lady Dudley may be phantasmagoric, she has a poetic truth. And here, I think, we begin to approach the secret of Balzac's creative genius—his faculty of assimilating the real and temporal without permitting himself for a moment to become its slave. No writer has ever been more unashamed, more superbly unselfconscious. We have only to compare Balzac and Flaubert (a martyr of his own sensitiveness and literary good taste) to feel again the superiority of Balzac's gift. Balzac's taste was variable or non-existent. His psychology was erratic (though almost invariably sound). He was occasionally vulgar; but his vulgarity was pitched in the heroic key. Put side by side with the masterpieces of the modern novelist, who tempers alarming realism and disarming sentimentality (*The Grapes of Wrath* provides an obvious example) or who purveys intellectualism in a predigested form (Mr. Charles Morgan cannot be improved on) or attempts to suffocate the critical faculty beneath a weight of words (witness the contemporary success of *Gone With the Wind*) Balzac's achievement is the more astonishing. He could write very long books which seem as brief as *Les Illusions Perdues*, or short books which seem as full and packed with meaning as *Le Lys dans la Vallée*. All bear the stamp of that poetic veracity which discards naturalism for the "super-realism" of the greatest literature.

PETER QUENNELL

NEW NOVELS

Prelude to Love. By JOLANDA FOLDES. *Hutchinson.* 8*s.* 3*d.*
Kitty Foyle. By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. *Faber.* 8*s.* 3*d.*
Danny. By WALTER BRIERLEY. *Duckworth.* 8*s.* 3*d.*
Asylum Piece. By ANNA KAVAN. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The House of Markuu. UNTO SEPPANEN. *Duckworth.* 10*s.*

Novels for adults about children are a very recent literary development. Nineteenth-century writers occasionally produced felicitous if over-objective child-portraits—Dickens is an obvious example—but, broadly speaking, the serious intuitive study of childhood made its first general appearance some time after the last war. The twin impacts of psycho-analysis and social-democracy (children, after all, were the most numerous of tyrannised minorities) probably had much to do with it, and it is perhaps significant that the same period also witnessed the literary debut of the earthy peasant and the moronic tough, two further subjects that the intellectual Victorians had considered beneath the attention of the serious writer. What are the criteria of a good novel about children? In the first place, it must present the muddle as well as the clarity of the childish mind; it must see events through the child's eyes, and yet convey their real significance to adult readers; it must indicate the nastiness as well as the virtues of youth; and it should, finally, prove interesting to children of an age similar to those it describes. This last point must not be pressed too far—after all, one hardly expects savages to read anthropology—but ought certainly to be true of stories about adolescence. In fact, of course, youth still prefers the old-fashioned school or adventure story, and leaves the fashionable novels based on child psychology to its less conservative elders. Whether the vast popularity of books about children—that is, about characters drastically undeveloped in mind, body and experience—be a healthy social or psychological indication is perhaps best left to future historians to determine.

Prelude to Love, which is admirably translated from the Hungarian, is a really excellent romance of feminine adolescence. Ria, a seventeen-year-old girl, becomes obsessed with the idea that her dead mother was a *femme fatale* who had progressed through fifty lovers in a fruitless search for perfection; and resolves to write a novel that shall immortalise the troubled soul of this high-minded and indefatigable lady. She tries to investigate her mother's exciting past, discovers and questions the fatal fiftieth lover, and ends by being gently disillusioned. The story is told as a day-to-day diary, and between reminiscences of her mother and plans for the novel, Ria notes down her troubles at school, quarrels with her sister, difficulties with her father, and all the little occasions of her intermittent enthusiams. Such a synopsis may suggest that Miss Foldes is one of those sophisticated, sexy, tiresome girls who clutter up so many Continental novels. Actually, she has realised that innocence is a psychological state rather than an absence of knowledge, and Ria, in spite of her grave and ponderous comments on Freud, Marx and venereal disease, is as naive and charming as any of Mr. Fairchild's family. Miss Foldes succeeds because she remembers the excited inconsistency that is a distinguishing feature of adolescence. Ria's advanced theories on the nobility of promiscuity run side by side with a pash for the handsome literature master and a resolve to marry him or become a nun; she records with equal emphasis and enthusiasm the implications of her mother's supposed suicide, and the unfair discrimination by which she loses marks on an essay. For her everything is wrapped in clouds of glory, and it is only at the end (the diary covers more than eighteen months) that she begins to see things in their adult perspective. *Prelude to Love* has many of the qualities that make a "popular" novel, though it is not as popular as its distressing jacket suggests; and as such will probably meet with considerable success. It has also, however, a freshness and accomplishment seldom found in combination, and its frivolous subject-matter should not dissuade those who appreciate writing of subtlety, sincerity and restraint.

Kitty Foyle and *Danny* are less effective than *Prelude to Love*, chiefly because their heroes are not properly characterised. True, they are vigorous and convincing—one has, indeed, encountered more Kittys than Rias—but they, nevertheless, emerge as types rather than as unique individuals. Ready-made writing of the sort found in both these books is an easy undertaking. To say "The lion roared and lashed his long tail" is a perfectly good characterisation of the animal, since the lion is a simple creature, and we can predict his behaviour as soon as we know his mood. In the same way, "'Mine's rye,' said Schultz, admiring his mauve hundred-buck suit in the bevel-edged mirror and loosening his heavy gun in its shoulder holster," has come to pass as adequate descriptive writing because it succinctly presents a familiar and well-defined type. True characterisation, however, is not the caricature of a class, but the portrait of a single individual. Best-sellers such as *Anthony Adverse* contain multitudes of clear-cut and well-coloured figures, but how many of them are individual in anything more than their superficial oddities? Kitty Foyle is an attractive personality, and her experiences with her old father, upper-class lover and chic French employer make lively reading and lack nothing in journalistic verisimilitude. Unhappily, we have met Kitty and her associate types so very often before that not one of their reactions is unfamiliar to us; and even the originality of the wisecracks cannot disguise the staleness of their setting. *Kitty Foyle* is a bright, slick, gently amusing novel of a quality that would win a new author some minor repute. From Mr. Morley it is a little disappointing, for all its felicities cannot bring life to a group of characters who died from overwork many novels ago. A similar complaint must be levelled against *Danny*. This little story of a miner's young son who leaves his village, lives with relations in the city, gets into trouble at school, and finally gets a job down the pit is nicely written and seems thoroughly realistic. But since Danny tends to be Every Boy he is in danger of being no boy at all; and although one wholly accepts him, he is too true to type to be worth recording in literature. This is a pleasant, unambitious account of nothing in particular happening in a working-class environment, and is just the sort of novel that might be turned out by the ten thousand in the British Proletarian Republic. The best one can say of it is that it has few faults; the worst, that it has still fewer positive merits.

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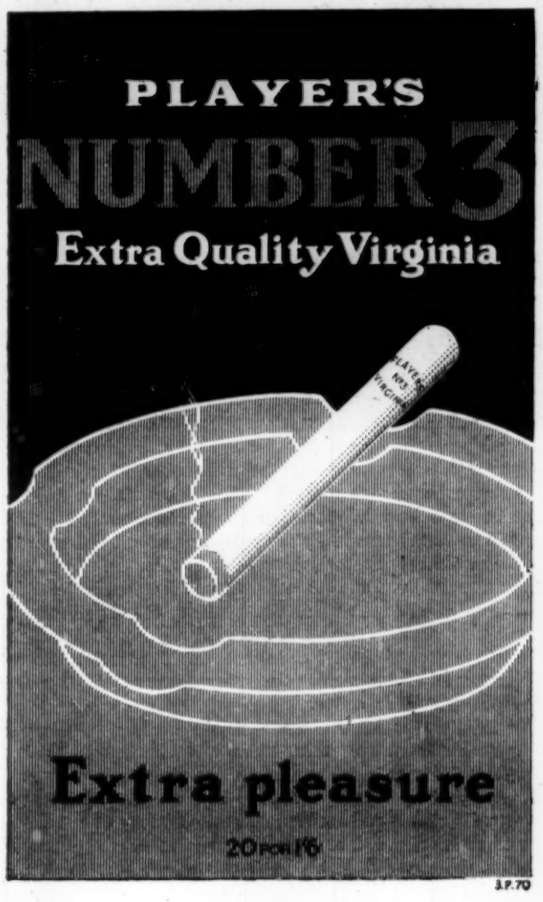

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Asylum Piece is a collection of sketches, clearly drawn from personal experiences, of schizophrene manic depression. Some of the stories describe the inmates of mental homes and others follow the earlier stages of age psychosis, but in all of them the symptoms and delusions are similar—the writer understands only one case. Miss Kavan's schizophrenia might well be styled Kafka's Disease, for it exhibits all the obsessions that distinguish the work of that now slightly faded writer. The victims suffer from persecution mania on a grand scale, they have mysterious, all-pervasive enemies, are terrified by anonymous sentences of death delivered in blue official envelopes, and are tried and condemned in their absence by invisible and omnipotent courts. The reality of these all-powerful persecutors is as dubious as that of Banquo's ghost, for though most of the tales present them merely as neurotic symptoms, they are sometimes acknowledged by independent witnesses. The publishers suggest that the book has a special significance to-day in view of the threatening approach of the totalitarian State in which a ubiquitous authority will control every life, the individual be reduced to a conditioned schizophrene reflex, and where no one need look to the ant except to call it brother. There is no need, though, to take the book so seriously: in any case, the dictator States have so far promoted paranoia rather than its opposite. Good entertainment needs no moral; and though the total effect of *Asylum Piece* is a little wearisome, it contains much that is observant, dramatic and, to the neurotic, more than a trifle alarming.

The House of Markuu, which, though well over 200,000 words long, is only a condensed version of the Finnish original, follows the struggles of a patriarchal farming family from the building of Finland's first railway to the post-war fight for independence. The royalties are, it appears, going to the Finland Fund, and for that reason I should like to be kind even to such a hash of strong meat as this. It is, as the publishers claim, full of cruelty, lust, horror, heroism and beauty; but it is also, sad to say, full of those dark, primal peasants who are part of the black sod they so stubbornly plough; and there are numerous scenes in which fathers cry "The land is ours, ours," and hammer their rebellious sons with fists as knarled and knotted as the roots of an old oak. Frankly, I am very tired of this Agrarian Fallacy—the theory that people who own the land they farm are naturally endowed with high capacities for lust, poetry and passion. No one could get away with so long a book devoted to, say, a family that owned a sweet shop; and I fail to understand why a close acquaintance with rutting, dung and farmyard animals makes a person worthy of epic. It is, perhaps, the fault of those intellectuals who have an inhibited longing for dark and primitive passions but are too realistic to imagine such instincts reside in anyone with whom they dine, and so project them on to any community outside their own experience. Of its kind, *The House of Markuu* is quite readable, and its chapters on the War of Independence are interesting in spite of their bias. But life is too short to read so much about so little: in the same number of words one could read *Sons and Lovers*, *Madame Bovary* and, if you must, extensive passages from the *Farmers' Year Book*.

JOHN MAIR

THE HUMAN FRONT

War Begins at Home. By MASS OBSERVATION. *Chatto and Windus.* 9s. 6d.

999 and All That. By NORMAN RILEY. *Gollancz.* 5s.

It has often been remarked that the trouble about the Government is that it is trying to win the last war over again. Both these books suggest that this is true at least of British propaganda methods.

The leading personalities in the Cabinet were in their prime in 1914 and are apparently convinced that they have only to begin where they left off in 1918, in order to be abreast of the times. Unfortunately, a good many things have happened since 1918 which have transformed the technique of warfare, not the least of them the discovery by the people of how they were fooled last time. People are never, as is sometimes rashly suggested, immune to propaganda; but they are intensely suspicious of any appeals which remind them of the last war. This makes them immune not to propaganda, in the sense of skilful persuasion, but to propaganda in the sense of the stock in trade of most politicians. Moreover, this war so far has been a war not of massed armies in conflict but of diplomacy, propaganda and trade, in which the co-operation of every civilian in his or her work is essential to victory. It is the people here and in enemy countries who are the decisive factor and yet the Cabinet is dominated by Service Chiefs who think so exclusively in military terms that they call the civilians the home front; and suppose that they can organise and propagand them like an old-fashioned army.

But they cannot, because the home front does not exist. The real problem is The Human Front, the millions of men and women, whether in uniform or in factories, on the Maginot Line or Siegfried Line, who know little of politics, hate war, are harassed and perplexed. It is these millions of British human beings who must be persuaded to carry on, these millions of Germans who must be persuaded to down tools. Such persuasion cannot be accomplished unless the Government is willing first to adopt scientific methods of discovering what they think, and, secondly, to use modern techniques for encouraging them to behave in the ways desired.

Mass Observation has done a national service in publishing these, inevitably hurried, results of an inquiry into British civilian reaction to the war. *War Begins at Home* is neither a detached nor by any means a complete analysis of public opinion. It cannot be, for the simple reason that Mass Observation has neither the funds nor the personnel for the job; what it demonstrates is the imperative need for the Government to get rid of its prejudices and illusions about the British people, and to pay for *and act upon* a scientific analysis of public feeling. A barometer of war-morale, thanks to the discoveries made in the interests of commercial advertising, is an immediate possibility; it is also an instrument as expensive and as necessary as U-boat or aeroplane detectors. After six months of war, we are still without one.

Even with its limited personnel, Mass Observation has made some interesting discoveries. Instead of yapping at the Red Posters, it analysed their influence and showed that a pre-test of this form of publicity is as necessary as a pre-test of a gun. If a gun explodes, it may kill twenty men: a faulty poster like the notorious "*Your* Courage . . . will bring *Us* victory," with its implication that the masses must fight for the victory of their rulers, may lower the morale of hundreds of thousands. So too with the failure to co-ordinate the boosting of our air defences with evacuation. By suggesting—as in the official "The Lion has Wings"—that the blimps would terrify raiders, the Government neatly succeeded in counteracting its efforts to prevent a return from evacuation areas. Again, by permitting its A.R.P. leaflets to be written in officialese, it produced the remarkable result that 61 per cent. of people in Bolton and 59 per cent. of people in Hampstead have no idea how to deal with an incendiary bomb.

The most interesting chapters in *War Begins at Home* deal with Dancing, the Pools and Sport, popular activities in which M.O.'s pre-war researches enable it to speak with special authority. It is fascinating to hear that the Valse, since it is associated with the lowering of lights, becomes less popular in the black-out and that among all the 999 occupants of the Bloomsbury skyscraper not one was appointed to deal with Jazz, one of the most potent propaganda instruments. The catastrophic effect of the sudden collapse of sport on morale is equally illuminating. Possibly the decision to close it down was militarily desirable, but who has been thinking seriously of a substitute for the main leisure occupation of a people?

Inevitably *War Begins at Home* has a thesis. M.O. believes that our chief problem is the gulf between "the people who matter" and the millions: it pictures them like two nations, each with its language, rituals, pastimes and occupations, and it argues that war-morale can only be maintained if the leaders keep the closest contact with the led. This is certainly a major task of the modern Popular State, whether Democratic, Fascist or Communist, and there is little evidence that our parliamentary and party machines do the job any better than the Nazi Party in Germany or the Communists in Russia. Too often our politicians accept the shrieks of the Press Lords, the mutterings in the clubs or the views of the party bureaucracies as "public opinion." The result is they give way, as in the delay over rationing, to tiny vested interests with the idea that they are accepting the wishes of the people. This can only be avoided if they decide to go behind Public Opinion and discover the feelings of the public. If they cannot learn everything from *War Begins at Home*, they can at least discover how to set about learning them.

999 and All That is as facetious as its title. Mr. Riley has written a disjointed and rather inaccurate history of the Ministry of Information from the narrow viewpoint of the professional journalist. After reading his book you might assume that there was no other organ of propaganda except the press, and no pro-

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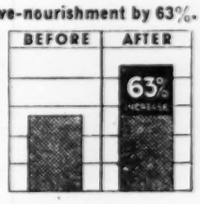

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pagandist except the pressman. Stories of the early days of the Ministry were amusing enough in September, 1938, but are hardly worth retelling now. Such a book would only be useful if it analysed precisely why the Ministry failed; but Mr. Riley is too good a pressman to show up Lord Camrose's "reorganisation" or to admit that the press's own determination to smash a dangerous competitor had something to do with the result. Students of the human front should read Mr. Riley and observe that the press as well as the Cabinet suffers from some dangerous blind spots.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

CITIZEN-SCIENTIST

Keeping Cool, and other Essays. By J. B. S. HALDANE. *Chatto and Windus.* 7s. 6d.

These are the occasional essays, lectures and broadcasts of an eminent scientist, and most of them are packed with scientific instruction and speculation. But what is most striking about them is not so much the efficiency of the writing, the acuity of its mental outlook or the concentration of the scientific dose, as the glowing fact that Professor Haldane is an extraordinarily active citizen as well as an extraordinarily active scientist, and that in him citizenship takes precedence. Professor Haldane's total lack of insulation against the society in which he lives is a remarkable fact, though of course it would be a commonplace in a society more capable of managing its affairs. Even now, except in the crisis of war, the average scientific worker is content with an almost absolute separation from the results of his work. "Look," he seems to say to the world at large, "these are the secrets of atoms, molecules and genes, microbes, glands, radio-waves, high explosives, aeroplanes; but what use you care to make of the power I put into your hands—well, that is your affair. I probe, understand, publish my conclusions, and pass on to my next problem; you act." Professor Haldane and a few other men of like temper and capacity are spending their lives in exposing the danger of this brand of laissez faire. It is amusing to notice how often this washes Professor Haldane into the front page news. Whenever the community lands itself in a spectacular failure to control the gadgets which it considers necessary for its wealth or its security, there as likely as not Professor Haldane will be found experimenting on himself in order that next time his fellow citizens may escape death. This book contains an instructive example of his peculiar services. "After-effects of Exposure of Men to Carbon-dioxide" looks at first sight ill-sorted in its setting of wireless talks and answers to those mock-profound questions ("What is Life?"—"What Next in Science?") which the popular press loves to shoot at professors. It is the only essay in this book that is written in the peculiarly colourless jargon which is the mark of the true scientific report. But what a valiant and characteristic colour flares in the footnote! After the *Thetis* disaster it was necessary to understand why the Davis escape apparatus failed to bring its men to the surface. Professor Haldane and four others therefore subjected their lungs to conditions simulating those which had trapped the men of the *Thetis*. Professor Haldane gives a few details of his collaborators:—

> It will be remembered that my colleagues . . . are former members of the British Battalion which was recently fighting on behalf of the Spanish Republic. Alexander commanded the battalion for some time. At the time of the experiment Renton was out on bail. As a leader of the unemployed he had been one of a party which entered the premises of a railway company in an effort to show that they were "genuinely seeking work," and he was on trial for this offence. I chose these men as colleagues because I had no doubt of their courage and devotion. Men with such qualifications were, however, refused admission to the Territorial Army . . .

It is not surprising therefore that in most of these essays, even those in which the social insulation seems complete, one has only to scratch the surface a little to come to politics of a highly pugnacious and sometimes cantankerous variety. "Blood Royal," for instance, is a very accomplished introduction to genetic theory as it works out in the sex-linked gene of haemophilia, the bleeding disease. But how comparatively dull it would have been were it not for the fact that Queen Victoria was a carrier, and that something microscopic which happened to the nucleus of a cell in one of the testicles of the Duke of Kent in 1818 should have set in train a century later (through Rasputin and the haemophilic Tsarevitch Alexis) the course of the Russian Revolution. Russia, materialism, and the Marxist philosophy are never far from these pages. I think myself that Professor Haldane writes best when his politics are disciplined by his science, but when he is least a professor and most an angry citizen I rejoice, if only to disagree with him.

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Master of None. By ROLAND PERTWEE. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.
The Story of the Winged-S. By IGOR SIKORSKY. *Hale.* 12s. 6d.

In their different ways these are success stories. How does one succeed? What is the recipe for becoming the designer and builder of the Yankee clippers, the leader of an Antarctic expedition, a popular author pursued by theatrical managers and gold-oozing editors? How does one become the first woman to fly the Atlantic? If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again—of course, but after reading these life stories one concludes that the majority are too well-adjusted, too "normal," too self-confident to get out of the rut. What seems to be necessary is a divided, dissatisfied nature and a capacity for obsession, a good touch of the more practical side of lunacy. Yet if timidity and a dreamy mind are characteristic of the successful, what about the enormous casualty lists among them? Hundreds of talented men have experimented with the aeroplane, for example—a perfectly sane lawyer once came to Igor Sikorsky with a box which he said had solved all the problems of flight—but few have been chosen. The fact is that the creative life is full of *culs de sacs* and avoiding them requires luck and instinct. The consolation is that new achievements do not belong to one man but are born of general ferment and co-operation, that the failures have played their part, if only by failing. It is of course true that individualism is often wasteful, especially when the intensity of competition makes secrecy essential; but whether it is more wasteful than collective effort is another question, for a large amount of the energy of groups is wasted in party warfare.

There is still another lesson which emerges from these books and I am inclined to think it is the most important of all. Talent

without private income is next to hopeless. Miss Earhart, Captain Scott and Sikorsky all came of that professional class which can provide for its sons and daughters the leisure that is sustained by an even modest security. In Scott's case, it is true, a relatively spacious life was visited by acute financial anxiety; and anxiety about the remote future was a dominant characteristic of his nature. Like many who are anxious about the remote he was irritable and impetuous about the present. His life has often been written and, in any case, his own Journal tells the story better than any biographer can. He was a thoughtful diarist, cautious and balanced in his introspection. I do not think any one has excelled Mr. Stephen Gwynn's *Life* written a few years ago; and Mr. Seaver, though he has written a sober and circumspect book on the inner character of Scott, does not really go very far in or add much to our knowledge. Indeed, by resisting almost all serious criticism of Scott, he represents a reaction from analysis towards eulogy. It is evident from Scott's moodiness and his very articulate letters and journals that there *is* an inner story. One can see that naval discipline probably made Scott run away from his own morbidity; for there does not seem to have been an explorer of any note who was not very neurotic. It is a frightful suggestion, but I should like to read a Freudian and a Marxist on Scott; it would at least relieve the Lord-Halifax-Gentleman atmosphere which entombs our great men and turns them into school-boy monsters. Within his chosen limits, however, Mr. Seaver is very readable. Scott was afraid of marriage and so was Amelia Earhart. They both wrote with dignity about their doubts. Mr. Putnam's memoir on his wife is interesting. It was, in a sense, publicity which first sent her across the Atlantic. One critic said of her that her chasing about the oceans in aeroplanes was typical of the boredom of modern women. This does not seem to have been in the least true. Her first flight over the Atlantic with Stultz, who had not recovered from one of his drunks when they set off, is an extraordinary story. There is a pathos in her fear of growing old and in her hoards of unused stockings, gloves, etc., bought as gestures towards feminity. Miss Earhart's luck lay in being born into a tolerant academic environment and in a new country where the ruts need never run deep.

Sikorsky's autobiography is more revealing. He is an educated man. In Kiev his father was a well-known professor of medicine, and when the son required a largish sum of money in order to go to Paris to study aviation, it was at once produced. At first Sikorsky nearly got into the helicopter *cul de sac*, but back in Russia the war gave him his chance. He succeeded with large bombers. Size has chiefly interested him since: and he has a good deal more faith now in the prospects of the giant air liner, than in the flying flivver. The Russian revolution ruined the middle class technicians and Sikorsky had a bad period picking up a living by teaching in the United States. It was his White Russian pupils who, stimulated by lectures, formed a kind of collective to finance a new company for him. And the first of the American S machines was built pretty well in a backyard and some of its parts came from a ten-cent store. Sikorsky is especially interesting on success and failure in invention and he has metaphysical views of his own on the origin of creative ideas.

Mr. Pertwee, being a professional author, has all the rest beaten as a writer of narrative, even allowing for a rather Punchified style. His gaiety is unforced. His Bohemian family, his early love affairs, his attempts at painting, his success on the stage where he played, very over-awed, with Irving, the story of his marriage and of his divorce—the war, he supposes, must have made him boring as a husband—all these episodes are done with a pleasant professional toughness and unaggressive candour. His special line is the stoic shrug and he is business-like about it. The portrait of Irving is very funny.

V. S. PRITCHETT

LABOUR ORTHODOXY

The Politics of Democratic Socialism. By E. F. M. DURBIN. *Routledge.* 7s. 6d.

This volume comes to us strongly commended by Mr. Herbert Morrison and Professor R. H. Tawney; it is, in essence, a thoroughgoing defence, rather diffuse and rambling, but full of good intentions, of the straitest orthodoxy of the Labour Party. It will have nothing to do with Marxism in any shape or form. There is nothing in the economic interpretation of history. There is no reality in the theory of the class-war. Since, in Britain, at least, there is no reason to suppose that the "short-term" programme of the Labour Party will be resisted by the capitalists, there is little likelihood of civil war; a nation which accepted the Reform Bill of 1832 has the kind of emotional relationship between its different groups which will enable it to find terms of appropriate compromise within the formulae of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Durbin writes with immense confidence and gusto; and his modest disclaimers of expertness in either history or Marxism are compatible with a fine certitude about the future which a more sceptical mind will envy. What it appears to amount to is that Mr. Dalton's *Practical Socialism for Britain* may be taken as the law and the prophets. Mr. Durbin stands at his right hand and keeps the bridge with him.

It is unfortunate that so forcible an exposition as this betrays, in many of its parts, a quite inadequate acquaintance with the argument Mr. Durbin is so anxious to condemn. He does not really understand the economic interpretation of history. Sometimes he discusses it as though it assumes that all actions are due to economic motives, a view which Marx and Engels both specifically denied. Sometimes he discusses it as though it assumes that the economic factor is the only determinant of historic events; and he is very anxious that its exponents should admit that it does mean this. It is unfortunate that Mr. Durbin does not appear to be acquainted with Engels's well-known letters to Schmidt and Bloch which would have saved him many pages of logic-chopping. A deeper knowledge, too, of Marx's historical writings would have shown him that Marx was as well aware as himself of the complexity of social structure; what, rightly or wrongly, he was concerned to demonstrate was that under capitalism it is the workers only who, as a class, have independent revolutionary significance. Mr. Durbin appears to believe that the compromise of 1832 is fatal to Marxist philosophy. But what he has to show is the very different position that the owners of the instruments of production will compromise when the results of their doing so is to surrender the essential privileges by which they maintain their power. He does not accomplish this by explaining that there would be no serious loss to industrial efficiency if the functions of directors were undertaken by management and the technicians.

Mr. Durbin has some admirable pages on the strength of capitalism, and he writes with an ardour that I fully share on the virtues of democracy against any other form of government. But the problem of our generation is the wholesale assault on democracy,

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and the only explanation Mr. Durbin has to offer of why that is irrelevant to ourselves—on whose behalf Mr. Chamberlain co-operated in the destruction of democracy in Spain and Czecho-Slovakia—is that our national character is different. Certainly I hope that if our democracy were attacked from within our historic tradition would lead us to defend it stoutly; but Mr. Durbin would do well to remember Lord Acton's famous warning "when in doubt, play national character." He himself appears to believe that forms of government in other states are not our concern. I suggest to him that the form of state in Germany and Italy is profoundly our concern because that impulse to aggression upon which he elsewhere lays so much emphasis is rooted in its character; and a state which has the impulse to aggression imposes habits upon democratic societies in an interdependent world which raises the ultimate questions of policy.

Warm praise is due to Mr. Durbin for his admirable exposition of the Labour Party's programme. I agree with him, if I may say so, that it is both moderate and practical. But his business is not to convince its friends of this; his business is to convince its enemies, especially those who, as for instance in the last two general elections, openly threatened sabotage if that programme won a majority. Mr. Durbin does not seriously consider the instruments by which it is at least possible this sabotage might be made effective; these are, he thinks, merely matters of "tactics" which can be overcome if only men retain the democratic spirit. I hope he is right; he has more confidence than, for example, the late Lord Balfour in the ability of political parties between which there is wide divergence of view to retain that spirit. He is so impressed by the strength of the constitutional habit in this country that the experience of its fragility elsewhere has no significance for him.

A word of gratitude is due to Mr. Durbin for some interesting statistical appendices, and an able frontal attack on the "classical" defence of the capitalist system. He has also given us a grim picture, by Miss Jane Samuel, of the cruelty practised under the dictatorships. I do not deny that cruelty. But the claim that the Soviet Government tortures its prisoners is not, I think, substantiated by evidence from an anonymous writer in the *Sunday Express* and by news-items from the *Times*. The crimes and blunders of the Soviet Union against the socialist movement are heavy enough in all conscience without relying on this type of evidence.

HAROLD J. LASKI

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Dachau, The Nazi Hell. By G. R. KAY and L. WOLFE. *Francis Aldor.* 5s.

I wish I could believe that these things were lies. I wish I could believe that they were "greatly exaggerated," like the atrocities of 1914. I wish I could believe that they had happened a long time ago in what we used to call the Dark Ages. I wish I could forget that they were happening now.

I have had too many personal accounts from Dachau and other Nazi concentration camps to doubt that these hells are deliberately created for a political purpose. They are invented to break the bodies and souls of all who resist by deed or word the absolute will of the Nazi State. They break the spirits of thousands who never see the inside of these camps. They are the subject of terrified whispers, the intangible weapon which makes cowards of men who could face hunger and death but shrivel up before the threat of months or years of nameless torture. We used to extol the heroism of martyrs who stood alone in the face of social ostracism, of imprisonment and perhaps of a cruel death. Their courage seems small in comparison with the courage needed to endure torture in obscurity. Men and women have gone singing to the flames. Some have been inspired by their belief in a future life; almost always they have been fortified by the chance publicly to witness to their faith. But to die in Dachau is to die unknown, to leave behind no name emblazoned on the scroll of history. Voluntarily to risk such a life and such a death needs, it seems to me, a courage that is more than human.

The most eloquent enunciation I have ever heard of Nazi atrocities came from the lips of Mr. Harry Pollitt in a great speech during the early days of the Hitler regime. He shocked some of his audience both by the realistic descriptions he gave of tortures inflicted on his comrades and more by an open demand for the chance to revenge their sufferings. On that day and every day for six years after that he and his friends have cried shame on those who hesitated to risk war against this atrocious regime. Listeners who had believed that war was the worst of human evils and would lead only to more Nazi atrocities and their imitation in other countries were gradually persuaded to abandon their pacifism, their caution, their belief in working-class war-resistance. After all, they learnt to say, there is something worse than war—meekly to accept the victory of barbarism. If we do not resist while we have tanks and machine-guns and aeroplanes to defend ourselves, what shall we or our children say when the slavery and concentration camps are established and there is no longer the material means of resistance? Consciously or unconsciously, it is that argument that has stiffened resistance, that overcomes fear and moral scruple. Here, in this book, soberly set down, are the details of that cold sadism whose bestiality united the forces of the Left in this country. To-day, apparently because Stalin has made friends with Hitler, only the despised Liberals and Social Democrats are left out of the forces of the Popular Front to maintain the thesis that cruelty is cruelty, and slavery slavery, as much in 1940 as in 1938. Does the blood of the martyrs no longer cry out to Harry Pollitt and his friends? To me that is a mystery. To most English people, this sober story of Dachau by a man who was free and who escaped physically and killed himself because he could not escape spiritually does not become more tolerable reading because Hitler has found a temporary ally in Stalin.

TOM PAINE

Horizon. MARCH NUMBER. 1s.

Mr. Connolly is the most skilful of hosts: with every succeeding course he serves a finer wine. The third issue of *Horizon* is much the best. It opens with a longish poem by Auden *In Memory of Sigmund Freud*. This contains both clumsy and sentimental passages, because Mr. Auden never seems to have time to make his verse as good as it could be, but it is a highly interesting poem, packed with telling phrases. There is a particularly well written poem by Norman Cameron, and excellent examples of Prokosch and Betjeman. The principal prose contribution is an essay by George Orwell on the Boy's Weeklies, which are the chief reading of most boys in this country. This is a fascinating, surprising and disconcerting piece of research. Mr. R. F. Harrod writes on Peace Aims and Economics, suggesting the international control not of politics and arms but of raw materials and manufactured goods. For him the Trade Cycle rather than capitalism is the chief danger to prosperity. This is an important essay. Then under the pseudonym of Howard Evans a fervent Communist attacks the intelligentsia for not wishing to find out the truth and proclaim it. The truth, it appears, consists of calling the Finnish people "Whites." William Plomer gives an absorbing account of his visit to the Kilvert country, Philip Toynbee writes a sharp little story about a prep-school, and Stephen Spender continues his self-examination. There is an illustration of a painting by the best of the younger English artists. Altogether this *Horizon* is a model of what a monthly review ought to be, and our only complaint is that Mr. Connolly confines his editorial to a couple of pages. Will he not make it a rule to write at least one review in every number?

Pagan Tapestry. By BERTHA SLOSBERG. *Rich and Cowan.* 10s. 6d.

This record of a triumph of youth over almost unimaginable circumstances produced by the last war is to be recommended to any who find their creative energies flagging under the stress of events to-day. Perhaps the ambition achieved in twenty-eight years, to marshal the actors on a great stage, was not so uncommon. But the passion for art and colour was born in a starving refugee child who, at the age of three and a half, had to flee from invasion and pogroms on the borders of Lithuania, and lived for the next seven years—with "lice, starvation, sex-knowledge, rape, massacre and constant death"—through war and revolution in Kharkov. Once, indeed, she was taken to see a propaganda play, and on its inspiration produced her own show, in her mother's vermin-ridden room, with actors from the slum tenement. More surprisingly the artist's vision remained with her after she and her mother had at last reached South Africa, where the father she had never seen had "made good" just too late to save them from the horrors of the war years. In a moving chapter Miss Slosberg describes the loneliness she now experienced as a mature "individual" among the girls at Kimberley High School—knowing to begin with not a word of the English or Afrikaans they spoke. It is chastening to realise that others of the Russian Jews at that time crowding South African schools and colleges may have had a similarly grim previous schooling.

But this girl, whose memory of horrors remained vivid, was never to cling to security. Presently she had the originality, twice throwing up safe jobs as a journalist, to embark—nearly penniless—on the wild gamble of producing native Africans in their own songs and dances. She brought it off, too, and secured the attention of a suspicious and even hostile South African public. But though successful in showing the possibilities of African art, she was robbed of her full triumph by the obscurantism of the South African Government, which refused passports to the troupe she had trained, thus preventing them from

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THEATRES

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Rates, and all information on page 260

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fulfilling a London engagement sponsored by Pavlova's producer, Alexandre Levitoff. Thereupon, Miss Slosberg, with only £20, ventured alone to London and set to work to train a band of London Nigerians to perform Zulu dances. After a desperate struggle to get them a chance she finally produced them in *Sanders of the River* and achieved her ambition on the stage of Drury Lane. The book is absorbing so long as Miss Slosberg forgets the film-stars she has interviewed and, with that keen sense of adventure which she most successfully communicates, writes about herself. In spite of the title, Miss Slosberg is less a pagan than a romantic, who traces, with the help of some astonishing coincidences, a pattern in the "tapestry" of her own life.

Self-Portrait. By GILBERT FRANKAU. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.
Men, Martyrs and Mountebanks. By BEVERLEY BAXTER. *Hutchinson.* 8s. 6d.
The Chosen Few. By WILLIAM GALLACHER. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 5s.

Here are three lively personalities revealing themselves, more or less discreetly, in semi-autobiographical reminiscences. Though his material is poor—tough Bohemianism mixed with Fascist politics is neither so shocking nor so interesting as he believes—Mr. Frankau has written the best book. A passionate interest in himself may make a man unpopular in life, but it is the making of an autobiography; and it is only Mr. Frankau's superb egocentricity which makes his in-bred and snobbish story of wealth, women and self so entertaining. He imitates Kipling not only in his books but in his life; but a curious streak of self-conciousness makes both into a pastiche of the Pukka Sahib infinitely more enjoyable than the real thing for which he craves. Mr. Baxter, as befits an experienced journalist, writes pleasantly of the contemporary scene. Undeterred by his publisher's claim that he would be a popular successor to Mr. Churchill in the role of contemporary historian, he has kept within his own compass of political chit-chat and light propaganda. He has some excellent anecdotes, in particular about the German Embassy, and M. Gafencu, and can do a good snap portrait of Mr. Chamberlain or Herr Von Ribbentrop. But he could hardly claim that *Men, Martyrs and Mountebanks* provides either a profound analysis of the outbreak of war or the sensational disclosures which the title suggests. Mr. Gallacher has also chosen an unfortunate title for his book. *The Chosen Few, a Sketch of Men and Events in Parliament*, is an unassuming chronicle of Mr. Gallacher's parliamentary career, in which a large proportion of the space is devoted to quotations from Hansard, and the usual Communist interpretation of international politics. Apart from the speeches of Mr. Gallacher and his friends, we are given little impression of Parliament, except that there are some jolly arguments and jokes in the Map Room when Mr. Gallacher and Mr. Maxton get together. Indeed the general impression is that Mr. Gallacher has a fine time in the House. The Scottish boys are fine, the Welsh boys are fine: some of the Conservatives are good chaps really. But there are some devils in the woodpile, especially Dr. Dalton, who is public school, and Mr. Greenwood, who serves the interests of the bourgeoisie. The chief interest of *The Chosen Few* is the proof it affords of the influence of "the best club in the world." Though Mr. Gallacher is entirely sincere in his revolutionary somersaults, the House has seen him for what he is—a good-hearted Scot—and made him feel really at home. Everyone will be sorry if one day he is replaced by a man who could be troublesome.

BOOKS TO COME

The autobiography of Havelock Ellis comes from Heinemann on March 4th. *My Life* took him forty years to write. Holding that autobiography was the most permanent form of literary art, he recorded his experiences with great care throughout this whole period, analysing his work and spiritual progress from year to year.

Hamish Hamilton announce for the same date *The Thirties* (1929–39 *in Great Britain*), by Malcolm Muggeridge. He writes of the values, people, books, events, oratory and journalism which shaped the situation with which we are confronted to-day. Later in the month this firm will publish a companion volume *Since Yesterday* (1929–39 *in America*), by F. L. Allen, author of *Only Yesterday*.

Mr. E. C. Bentley's autobiography, *Those Days*, is due from Constable on March 5th. Through a personal narrative—which includes an account of the triumph of *Trent's Last Case*—Mr. Bentley attempts to describe the state of mind of the average educated Englishman before the war of 1914. He has added a post-war Preface dated Christmas, 1939.

In spite of the war, Allen and Unwin are continuing to publish the Phaidon Press Art Books. On March 5th they issue a complete edition of the *Paintings of Michelangelo*. This is the first time that the process of reproduction has been carried out in England and the publishers claim that the results are better than ever. The Phaidon Press has in preparation a companion volume of the sculptures.

An account of the formation of the Suez Canal Company and its finances and composition—*The Spoliation of Suez*—by Pierre Crabitès, comes from Routledge on March 1st. The author who has had access to new sources in the Egyptian archives has treated the subject primarily from the Egyptian point of view.

On the same day Routledge will publish *A French-English, English-French Military Dictionary*, compiled by J. O. Kettridge, F.S.S.A.

Commander C. R. Benstead, author of *The Weather Eye*, coming from Hale on March 4th, is a Meteorological Officer who was transferred from the *Courageous*, shortly before it was blown up, to the *Furious*. Describing weather lore theories from those of Aristotle to the latest Norwegian researches, he calls his book (which is illustrated with his own sketches) "an irreverent discourse upon Meteorological Lore, ancient and modern, with many references to the art of forecasting as now practised."

In *The Contemplative Gardener*, due from Faber on February 29th, which is a companion volume to the author's *The Curious Gardener*, Mr. Jason Hill shows how to get the most out of a small pleasure garden with the least possible expense. Mr. John Nash has illustrated both volumes.

Mr. Douglas Reed has written a pamphlet, *Fire and Bomb, a Comparison Between the Burning of the Reichstag and the Bomb Explosion at Munich*, which will be published by Cape on February 27th. Mr. Reed was in the Reichstag at the time of the burning and attended the trial. He draws attention to the extraordinary resemblance between the methods used by the Nazis on both occasions to manufacture charges against foreigners. Mr. Reed's biography of Otto Strasser, *Nemesis*, is due from Cape in March.

MARIE SCOTT-JAMES

Week-end Competitions

No. 524

Set by Roger Marvell.

Mr. Augustus John has accepted re-election for the Royal Academy. A first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea are offered for the best comment in prose or verse.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 1st.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 522

Set by R. G. E. Willison

Most people treasure at least one book which, while it is neither obscure nor very difficult to obtain, is not known to the majority of "common readers." How few Londoners interested in the arts seem to know J. T. Smith's *Nollekens and his Times*, a real eighteenth-century gossip book with more than a spice of malice. Is there any Glasgow man who would not be gently stirred by W. G. Riddell's *Adventures of an Obscure Victorian* (Macmillan)? While Dr. Dan McKenzies' *Aromatics and the Soul* (Heinemann) is a by-way to lure most people with a nose. The usual prizes of £2 2s. and half a guinea are offered for the most enticing recommendations of such a forgotten book. Entries must not exceed 150 words and the name of the publishers should be stated if possible.

Report by R. G. E. Willison

This competition has produced the titles of some strange and many obviously interesting books. Some entrants were seconded for recommending books too well known (Shira with Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, for instance), while others fastened on a medical or theological curiosity which admittedly would amuse for a reading, but could hardly qualify as a standby—so, reluctantly, went Alixandre with *Primitive Physic: or An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*, by John Wesley, A.M. (1747), and Mr. H. C. Withers' *Scripture History for the Improvement of the Young* (Anon., published by Kelly, 1843), both with luscious quotations. In this category, too, came Mary with a pamphlet of unknown origin, *On False Teeth*, by one John Howard.

The only books of humour mentioned were all Americans. *Artemus Ward—His Book* (Chatto and Windus), Max Adeler's *Out of the Hurly-Burly* (Routledge), Anne Warner's *Susan Clegg and Her Neighbours' Affairs* (Gay and Bird, 1906), and John Kendrick Bangs' *Houseboat on the Styx* (Harper and Bros.). No one mentioned Arthur Binstead of *Pink 'Un* fame!

Religion produced John Bunyan's *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, Alexander Whyte's *Appreciation of Newman* (Oliphant Anderson and Terrier, 1901), Richard O'Hanlon's *What If This Friend . . .* (Cassell) and Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity*.

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It was rather surprising that no one mentioned queer folk like Baron Corvo (*Hadrian VII*, Chatto & Windus) and *Ronald Firbank* (published by Duckworth), nor Francis Stockton, whose short story *The Lady or the Tiger?* was certainly a "wow." Not even one semi-technical book was recommended and both war and politics were at a heavy discount.

The operative words of the conditions were *enticing recommendation*, so the judging was rendered more easy by the test "which book would I most want to read?" Without doubt, *Proletarian Pilgrimage*, by John Paton (Routledge) recommended by A. Boorjoys, and, alas, disqualified for exceeding the word limit. This left Mr. T. Wilson's recommendation of *The Etchingham Letters*, by Ella Fuller Maitland and Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart. (Smith Elder and Co., 1899 or 1900) first, and Mr. Allan M. Laing, second, with *Mystifications*, by Miss Clementina Stirling Graham (T. N. Foulis, 1911). Special mention should be made of Miss Elstob's *The Guide to Caper* (Chatto and Windus), G. E. G. on John Mitchel's *Jail Journal* (Gill and Son, Dublin), Kit-cat on *Viva Mexico*, by Charles Macomb Flandreau (Appleton, 1909), all of which whet the appetite. Mr. J. A. Kilby recommends *The Scandal and Credulities of John Aubrey*, edited by John Collier (Peter Davies), a book which, though not recondite, is perhaps not as well known as it might be.

FIRST PRIZE

"THE ETCHINGHAM LETTERS"

Epistolary story-telling is always difficult, but the Letters which pass between Sir Richard Etchingham and his sister, Elizabeth, together with a few from relatives and friends, give us a vivid picture of well-to-do life in the more restful era of late Victorian days. Sir Richard and Elizabeth are cultured folk, quoting aptly from minor Tudor poets and writers. Odd scraps of information, Eastern proverbs and legal niceties appear in his letters, but his erudition is matched by his well-read sister's mediaeval French and herbalistic lore. To modern readers the tale unfolded in these letters may seem slow-moving and occasionally sentimental: the novelty of the bicycle as a means of locomotion will strike them as archaic, but Lady Etchingham's hypochondria, parochial difficulties and the gardener's complaints will ring as true to-day as forty years ago, and the slowly elaborated presentment of character is enhanced by the charm of scholarship.

T. WILSON

SECOND PRIZE

"MYSTIFICATIONS"

Way back in the 1820's, a high-spirited, young Scottish lady of genius, Miss Clementina Stirling Graham, perpetrated a series of clever and amusing personations in which, taking the characters of various delightful old ladies, she hoaxed many of the great men of her day and country (who knew her well enough in her own person). Thirty years later she was persuaded to publish her own account of these "Mystifications," and the world learned how Lord Jeffrey, Lord Eldin, Sir Walter Scott and many others had entertained "the Lady Pitlyal" unawares.

Miss Graham's personations were made memorable both by skill in dressing the parts and an extraordinary gift for impromptu dialogue of amazing shrewdness and humour. *Mystifications*, on this account, is a unique treasury of Scottish anecdote and epigram, and reveals its author as an early and even greater Ruth Draper.

The following titles may serve as a reading list:

M. Y. LERMONTOV. A Hero of Our Time. *Philip Allan*, 1928.
F. H. BURNETT. T. Tembarom. *Hodder and Stoughton.*
RT. HON. BULWAR LYTTON. Lanoni. *Routledge.*
GRANT ALLEN. Physiological Aesthetics. *Henry S. King*, 1877.
SOUTHEY. The Doctor. *Bell.*
GEORGE SAINTSBURY. Notes on a Cellar Book. *Macmillan.*
Lady Nugent's Diary.
ALLAN ROSS MACDOUGALL. The Gourmet's Almanac. *Desmond Harmsworth*, 1931.
ALLEN UPWARD. The New Word. *Fifield*, 1908.
L. P. JACKS. Mad Shepherds. *Williams and Norgate.*
Some Letters of a Man of No Importance. (Anon.) *Cape.*
SHERRINGHAM AND MEAKIN. The Court of Sacharissa. *Heinemann.*
EDGAR LEE MASTERS. Spoon River Anthology. *Werner Laurie.*
FRANK E. SMEDLEY. Frank Fairlegh, or Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil.
FORD MADOX FORD. The Great Trade Route. *Allen and Unwin*, 1937.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

A good many readers have written asking for the answers to the General Knowledge Paper which I set on January 27th. Here they are. Unfortunately, I have mislaid the answer which the contributor of question 10 sent and I myself have been defeated by his problem, "Who was declared by his enemies to have married his daughter?" Can anyone help with the solution? Was it Swift?

1. (*a*) A horse gets up forelegs first, a cow hindlegs first. (*b*) A horse moves right foreleg and left hindleg together, a camel right foreleg and right hindleg. (*c*) The following British wild flowers have no green leaves: Dodder, Broomrape, Birdsnest Orchis, Butcher's Broom, Toothwort, Yellow Birdsnest, Coral Root. (*d*) The Swift is one of the birds which cannot walk or hop on the ground. Among British birds which pair for life the most prominent are perhaps the eagle, the swan, the raven, and the crow.

2. The pastimes associated are: Fly-fishing with March brown, stag-hunting with Puster, shooting with Position-Finder, flat-racing with Racing Plate, shove-halfpenny with Full Bed, ski-ing with Telemark, flying with Falling Leaf, real tennis with Dedans, skating with Bracket, hearts with Black Maria, bridge or whist with Petering.

3. The lightest element is hydrogen. Solid iron will float in mercury. The fuel in a Diesel engine is ignited by pressure. An amalgam is a mixture of a metal with mercury. The special virtues of cod liver oil are vitamins A and D. The evidential information derived from blood grouping tests can acquit but not condemn the defendant.

4. The American for window-blind is shade, for curtain is drape, for return-ticket is round-trip, for season-ticket holder is commuter, for a banknote is a bill, for a treasury-bill is a treasury-note, for a shop-assistant is a clerk, for a commercial traveller is a salesman, for cotton wool is cotton, for braces is suspenders, for sock-suspenders is garters, for a tram is a street-car, for the first floor is the second floor.

The English for a diaper is a napkin, for a shopgirl is a shop assistant, for a public school is a State school, for an elevator is a lift, for a barbecue is a grill, for a tuxedo is a dinner jacket, for a cuspidor is a spitoon, for a realtor is an estate agent.

5. The shoemaker's son is Stalin, the baker's son Daladier, the blacksmith's son Mussolini, Hitler's father was thrice married, Lloyd George's was a schoolmaster, Neville Chamberlain was a sisal grower. De Valera was saved from execution by his American citizenship; the Countess Markowitz was the first woman elected an M.P. In Switzerland the nominal head of the State is also President of the Government; in Finland there are only 12 citizens with incomes over £6,500 a year; Iceland has the oldest parliament.

6. Here are the wavelengths in ascending order: ultra violet, indigo, a perm, C sharp, an Atlantic roller, Hamburg, Lahti.

7. (*a*) The countries bordering on the German Reich in 1914 were Russia, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland Denmark. The countries bordering on the German Reich on September 1st 1938 were Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Jugoslavia Italy, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium Holland, Denmark. The countries bordering on the German Reich on January 1st, 1940, were Lithuania, U.S.S.R., Hungary, Jugoslavia, Italy, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Denmark. (*b*) The countries bordering on Russia in 1914 were the Japanese Empire, China, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Rumania, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Norway. The countries bordering on Russia on January 1st, 1940, were Japan, Manchuria, Mongolia, Sinkiang (China), Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Rumania, Hungary, German Poland, East Prussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Esthonia, Finland.

8. The following rivers are arranged in descending order of size: Mississippi, Nile, Si-Kiang, Vistula, Rhône, Seine, Po, Severn. The following are grouped into relevant pairs: Santos, Coffee; Staten Island, Humming-birds; Nigeria, Cape Coast Castle; Aaland, the Grain Race; Montelimar, Nougat.

9. You may get married between the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; you may drink beer in Oakham till 10.30 p.m., in Uppingham till 10 p.m.; you may use a workman's ticket on any train that gets you to your destination before 8 a.m.; you may light a bonfire during non-black-out hours.

10. (i) Cervantes suffered the maiming of his left hand "for the greater glory of the right"; (ii) Milton was called "the lady" of his college; (iii) Dante fell in love with and immortalised a girl of nine; (iv) Keats began life as an apothecary's apprentice; (v) Swift (?) was declared by his enemies to have married his daughter; (vi) Tolstoi wrote an official account of the Siege of Sebastopol.

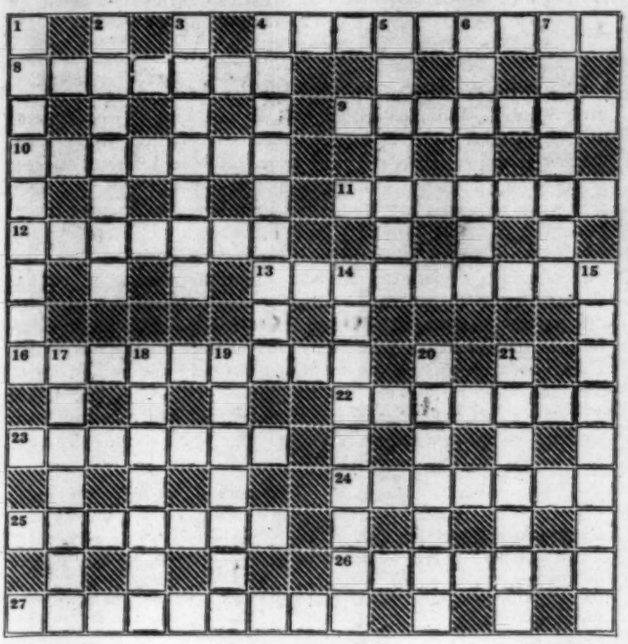
11. (*a*) La Fille du Regiment was composed by Donizetti; (*b*) La Fille de Mme. Angot by Lecocq; (*c*) Genoveva by Schumann; (*d*) Atys by Lully; (*e*) Masaniello by Auber; (*f*) Lulu by Berg; (*g*) Nabucodonosor by Verdi; (*h*) The Merry Wives of Windsor by Nicolai; (*i*) Falstaff by Verdi; (*j*) Sir John in Love by Vaughan-Williams; (*k*) The Jewels of the Madonna by Wolf-Ferrari; (*l*) Benvenuto Cellini by Berlioz; (*m*) Edgar by Puccini; (*n*) Mozart and Salieri by Rimsky-Korsakoff; (*o*) The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein by Offenbach; (*p*) Camacho's Wedding by Mendelssohn; (*q*) Zelmira by Rossini; (*r*) Les Deux Journées by Cherubini; (*s*) The Corregidor by Wolf; (*t*) La Favorita by Donizetti.

12. (*a*) The Sistine Madonna is to be found in Dresden; (*b*) The Gypsy Madonna in Vienna; (*c*) The Madonna dell'Orto in Venice; (*d*) The Litta Madonna in Leningrad; (*e*) The Polish Rider in New York; (*f*) The Zwinger in Dresden; (*g*) The Giralda in Seville; (*h*) The Ali Kapi in Isfahan; (*i*) The Tempesta in Venice; (*j*) The Arena Chapel in Padua; (*k*) The Isenheim Altar in Colmar; (*l*) The Blind Girl in Birmingham; (*m*) The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem; (*n*) The Schifanoia in Ferrara; (*o*) The Marino Casino outside Dublin; (*p*) The Superga in Turin; (*q*) Un Dimanche à la Grande Jatte in Chicago; (*r*) The House in the Wood in The Hague; (*s*) The Death of Marat in Brussels; (*t*) The Enseigne de Gersaintes in Berlin; (*u*) The Surrender of Breda in Prado, Madrid; (*v*) The Rake's Progress in the Soane Museum, London; (*w*) The Martyrdom of St. Symphorien in Autun; (*x*) The Monbijou Palace in Berlin; (*y*) Malcontenta on the Brenta near Strà; (*z*) La Favorita outside Palermo.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 520

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Miss G. H. Rowland, 39 North Bar Without, Beverley, Yorks.

ACROSS

4. The Tempest deserted. (9)

8. It must be an uncomfortably hot and sticky complaint. (7)

9. Suggests a spotted belt. (7)

10. One always looks under it. (7)

11. Desolate recompense. (7)

2. Apart like it is below. (7)

13. Where craftiness is taught. (9)

16. Device for waking the sleeper? (9)

22. He would obviously spoil the scheme. (7)

23. Usual rule for a carpenter. (7)

24. Then oil it! (7)

25. Followed the foot track. (7)

26. First to go in for hero-worship. (7)

27. Set ten men in them. (9)

DOWN

1. Pleasing antithesis to being a nonconform-ist. (9)

2. The off-drive as it were. (7)

3. Or R in cipher. (7)

4. It might be called a movable stopper. (9)

5. Clubs for chauffeurs? (7)

6. The pet has got hurt being twisted about. (7)

7. It makes a difference to tiros. (7)

14. Battery screws, but not worn-out artillery horses. (9)

15. Music with a string missing? (9)

17. Once needed to make a bow. (7)

18. The departure platform? (7)

19. A questionable mark. (7)

20. Not the bunting that flies at the mast head. (7)

21. These sisters are all stars. (7)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

THE TREASURY'S FIRST "CALL-UP"—RE-INVESTMENT OF FUNDS FROM AMERICA—"SHELTERED" EQUITIES

IT may not be clear to the unprofessional investor why the gilt-edged market should move up when the Treasury publishes its first list of American securities to be requisitioned for the defence of the realm. He may look through the list and be amazed to find that many of them—if not the bulk—are highly speculative Wall Street equities. Holders of such volatile stocks, he may argue, are not likely to reinvest in stolid gilt-edged securities: they will buy the speculative equity shares available on the London market. True, but they cannot buy unless others sell (new capital issues of equity shares being non-existent) and when the sellers contemplate the higher prices which the reinvestment of the repatriated funds has brought about in the equity markets, they may either leave their money on deposit at the banks or reinvest in British Government stocks. The estimates of the amount of money which will be repatriated by the first Treasury "call-up" of American securities range from £20 to £40 millions. It is a small beginning but there are other lists to follow and it may be a long war. The glittering prospect before the investor is that the limited supply of securities existing in the Stock Exchange will be forced up almost to "scarcity" values as the repatriation of British funds goes on. It is very pleasant to bring down the rate of interest and enable the Government to borrow more cheaply, but it will be really alarming when British equity shares are all intrinsically over-valued.

* * *

How the Treasury made up its very peculiar list of requisitioned securities has puzzled even the professional investor. The list ranges from such first-class "investment" shares as North American, Commonwealth Edison, Consolidated Edison, Norfolk and Western Railway, Union Pacific Railway, Allied Chemical, Du Pont, American Can, American Tobacco, Reynolds Tobacco, Montgomery Ward, Commercial Credit, to complete gambles such as Radio Corporation, Greyhound Corporation, Pure Oil, Crane, Spiegel, Republic Steel, not to mention some of the aircraft companies. Why Montgomery Ward is included and not Seanss Roebuck, or Standard Oil of California and not Standard Oil of New Jersey, or Republic Steel and not U.S. Steel or Bethlehem Steel, deepens the mystery. And it is surprising that there are sufficient British holders of such stocks as H.L. Green, Paramount Pictures 6 per cent. preferred, Cerro de Pasco Copper, to warrant Treasury requisitioning. One explanation is that the Treasury drew the names out of a hat. Another is that its advisers picked out the shares which they thought were due for a rise. This explanation may not appeal to the many disgruntled holders who are being bought out at a heavy loss on their purchase price. A more likely explanation is that these were stocks for which marketing arrangements had been completed. As regards the marketing it may not be without significance that the J. P. Morgan partnership, which acted as the British Government's agents in the last war, was converted into a trust company last week.

* * *

The problem of reinvesting the repatriated funds is exercising every broker—and City editor. I do not care to recommend ordinary shares which I expect to see over-valued before long, for few investors sell at the right time. Nor do I care to suggest shares which may not look expensive to-day but will look very dear when the excess profits tax has been raised to 80 per cent. or when the principle of forced loans has been applied to company surpluses. Perhaps it would be wise for the investor, if he has surrendered speculative American shares, to average on certain of his heavily depreciated British shares rather than rush after the popular investment "leaders" which are certain to be over-valued. Nevertheless the "sheltered" class of equities which I have been recommending in the past should not be left out of consideration. Here are the present market prices and yields of some of this class (the flour milling shares being included on the supposition that the milling agreement with the Government will be fair to the companies):—

	Present Price	Div. %	Gross Yield %
Amalgamated Metal, £1	20/3	7%	6 18 3
British Aluminium, £1	50/-	12½%	5 0 0
British Sugar Corporation	18/-	4%	4 8 9
Imperial Chemical, £1	32/1½	8%	†5 2 3
Imperial Tobacco, £1	6 1/16	*23%	£6 1 0
Ranks, 5/-	17/3	18%	5 4 3
Rhokana, £1	9⅜	50%	†6 4 9
Spillers, £1	57/6	15%	5 4 3
Tate and Lyle, £1	54/6	13½%	4 19 0
Woolworth, 5/- units..	63/-	65%	5 3 2

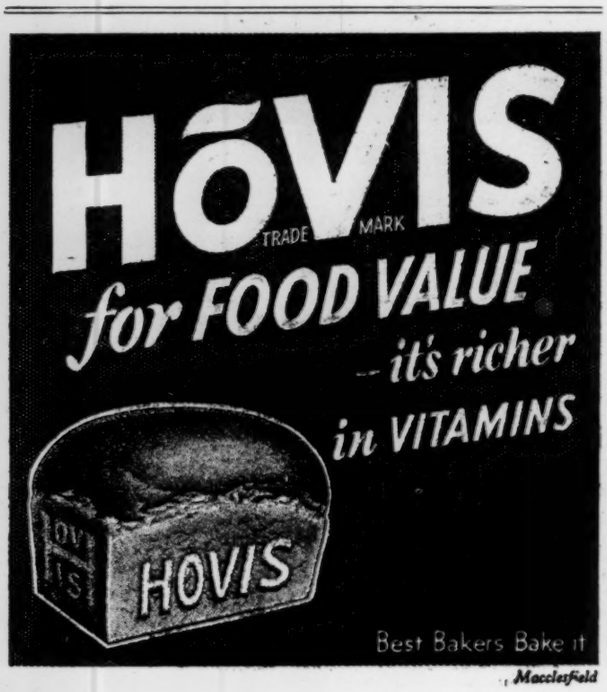
* Free of tax.

† Equivalent gross yield after allowing for a reduced rate of tax.

Some of these shares are popular "leaders" in the market and will probably be quoted at higher prices by the time this page is in print. If they still return yields around 5 per cent. they may be considered as not too dear, but in view of the burdens of taxation, which are bound to be increased, the margin between the yields on gilt-edged stocks and on equity shares of the investment class should not be much less than 1½ per cent. A final point. As the home railways may now be considered as a "sheltered" industry the marginal guaranteed and preference stocks might also be included in this list. For example, L.M.S. 4 per cent. preference at 67½ to yield 5.93 per cent. and the (1923) junior preference at 57½ to yield 6.95 per cent., together with L.N.E. 4 per cent. 2nd guaranteed at 74½ to yield 5.37 per cent., should attract the buyers returning home from America.

* * *

It is not only the wicked capitalist who tries to bolster up the price of securities on the Stock Exchange. Public Boards also take a hand. I made some rude remarks last week about the freezing of London Passenger Transport Board "C" Stock at the minimum price of 65. The peg was removed on Thursday and the price fell to 51, but before this was allowed the London Passenger Transport Board declared a fancy interim dividend of 1½ per cent. on the "C" Stock on account of the year to June 30th next. In the previous year the revenue earned was only just sufficient to pay 1½ per cent. for the 12 months. Under the recent railway agreement this was the minimum revenue guaranteed. (The maximum allowed as standard revenue is 5½ per cent.) Everyone knows that this interim dividend of 1½ per cent. is well in excess of the revenue earned in the six months to December 31st, but as it is no longer decent to freeze the price at 65, the Board has made an indecent effort to boost it. Does the Board really expect to earn more than 1½ per cent. in the current six months? Clearly it cannot do so unless ——— (deleted by Censor). At the current price of 51 I would advise an exchange into Great Western Ordinary Stock at 48. Great Western has just paid 3½ per cent. for 1939 and can earn a maximum of 8 per cent. In my opinion it is the stronger Stock, if we ignore price boosting.



Company Meeting

GAS LIGHT & COKE COMPANY

SIR D. MILNE-WATSON'S ADDRESS

THE ordinary general meeting of the Gas Light and Coke Company was held on February 15th at Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.

Sir David Milne-Watson, Bt., LL.B., D.L. (the Governor), in the course of his speech said: Coal has cost us more by £131,000. This would have been a very different figure but for the fact that there has been a considerable reduction in the coal carbonised since the war started; we have used over 200,000 tons less. The total cost of war expenditure so far, apart from items of a capital nature, is £268,000, of which £153,000 was spent up to the time when the price of gas was increased. Revenue from gas shows an increase of £145,000, due to the increases in price and not to any increase in consumption, which was down by 5¾ per cent.

The balance transferred from revenue account to net revenue account is £1,725,000, as against £2,066,000 for the previous year. This balance, after adding the amount brought forward from the previous year and interest received and after deducting debenture interest and dividends paid for the June half-year, leaves a sum of £492,000 available to pay dividends for the December half-year. This sum enables the directors to recommend the usual dividend on the Preference stocks and Maximum stock and, after transferring £25,000 from the reserve fund, a dividend for the half-year at the rate of £3 8s. per cent., making £4 10s. per cent. for the year, on the Ordinary stock. The payments of these dividends in respect of the half-year ended December last will absorb £517,000, leaving no balance to be carried forward. No contribution to the redemption fund will be required.

Turning now to the balance-sheet, it will be seen that whereas last year we had a loan from the bank of £700,000 this year we have none.

I would also draw your attention to the last item on the asset side of the balance-sheet and point out that to enable the company to fulfil its obligations to the community we have spent the large sum of £421,000 to date on the erection of plant, shelters and other structures, of which we expect to recover a figure in the neighbourhood of £85,000 from the Government and others. This is in addition to sums totalling over £43,000 which have already been recovered.

PRICE INCREASES

The price of gas is inseparable from the price of coal, and as our old-time contracts for coal expired and we came on to the new level of price for coal, the price of gas was advanced to 9¾*d.* per therm in March last. The effect of war on the output of the company was instantaneous. Children were evacuated by hundreds of thousands and many families followed suit as well as business firms, large and small, and numerous groups of Civil Servants. This, coupled with the blackout, caused an immediate and startling decrease in output of 20-25 per cent., which continued with very little variation until the end of the year.

The directors felt, however, that they could not put up the price of gas until they could see what the effect of the war on the revenue of the company was likely to be, and so for two months they continued to supply gas at the very unremunerative price of 9¾*d.* It then became clear that during September and October we had suffered a loss of gas revenue alone of nearly £250,000 and that we must be prepared for a decrease in business of at least 20 per cent. Accordingly, with great reluctance we decided to put up the price of gas in November to 12¼*d.* an increase of 2½*d.* The reasons for this course can be briefly summarised:—

1. The company had lost between a fifth and a fourth of its business through evacuation and black-out, with no corresponding reduction in costs of supply;
2. Heavy Civil Defence costs had to be borne;
3. Coal transport costs had increased by more than 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton;
4. Increased costs of commodities and insurance.

The combined effect of these factors was to reduce net earnings at a rate which would have amounted to more than £1,800,000 in a full year. The overwhelming majority of Press and public accepted the unpleasant necessity of a price increase. It would not have been possible to carry on the supply of gas in accordance with our statutory obligations without taking the step which we did.

DIVIDEND DECISION

In considering the appropriate dividend policy to adopt the directors had to keep in view various facts and considerations. The Act of Parliament under which the company operates gives it the statutory right to pay a dividend of 5 per cent., no matter what price it may be forced to charge for its gas. The practice of limiting dividends in such a way as to drive them down indefinitely as the price rose might lead to a situation in which a gas undertaking found it impossible to raise ordinary capital on economical terms for the extension and improvement of the supply of our essential commodity. In such a case the public would suffer, and it was to protect the public as much as gas undertakings that the Government introduced the principle of the basic dividend, which enables an undertaking, engaged as it is in the provision of an essential service, to preserve the right to maintain an adequate rate of return on Ordinary capital, irrespective of price charged. That was one consideration that the directors had to keep in mind.

Another consideration was that some part of the company's difficulty arose out of the special and temporary fact that the price had not been raised to an adequate figure until two months after the outbreak of war. The directors, therefore, felt that it was in the best interests of all classes concerned, including the gas-consuming public, not to allow the rate of dividend for the year to fall too far below the basic minimum allowed by our statute but to declare a dividend making the annual rate for 1939 £4 10*s.* per cent., even though that rate meant drawing upon funds outside current earnings. No one can say that the shareholder is not being asked to do his part; not only is he being asked to agree to a heavy percentage reduction in dividend for the half-year, but of the £325,000 which the reduced half-yearly dividend requires he has to find £232,000 from money which has in past years been set aside for a rainy day.

As you see, we have taken £25,000 from the reserve, which is held for just such purposes as the meeting of a difficulty which is in part temporary, like the present. We have made use of our carry-forward of £54,000, and we have also, again as an emergency measure justified by the circumstances, charged against the special purposes fund, which is maintained for occasions such as this, £153,000 of the current expenditure which we were forced to incur in connection with civil defence.

Our actions in relation to price and dividend have been governed by the twin considerations that we must cover our costs in the maintenance of the essential supply of gas and its by-products and that we must provide for a reasonable dividend in the present circumstances.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

The picture of stringency and difficulty which I have drawn is one that has arisen wholly and solely out of war circumstances. For the first eight months of 1939 our sales of gas were proceeding at such a rate that we should have achieved an output that would have been by a substantial margin a record in the company's history. It is cold comfort to recall that fact now, and I mention it simply to remind you of the essential health and strength of the company, and of the firm and increasing hold that gas has upon the confidence of the consuming public—domestic, commercial and industrial.

So far as anyone can humanly foresee we can look forward cheerfully to the future progress of the company as soon as normal conditions return. That makes it all the more essential for us to maintain the company's assets and productive resources in a proper state of efficiency and not allow ourselves to get seriously into arrears, either in the financial sense or in the sense of falling behind with the maintenance of plant. Whatever additional costs and burdens war may impose upon us we shall have to do our best to meet them as they come. The additional costs that had fallen upon us up to November last were met by the advance in price then decided upon. But even since then there have been additional burdens such as further substantial advances in the cost of coal, coal transport and wages. While I cannot attempt to forecast the future, I have endeavoured to make clear the point of view of the directors in considering and dealing with the problems which we have to face.

SERVING EMPLOYEES

In all, 2,000 of the company's employees are now on full time national service with the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Air Force or on Civil Defence. We are proud of these men, and we are doing what we can to help them financially, especially the married men.

Large numbers of men at the works and on the district have been trained by us so that they are ready at a moment's notice to defend London's gas supply from the risks of aerial bombardment and to take the steps necessary to maintain the supply as far as possible in all circumstances.

I have to report the death of Sir Francis Goodenough, after a very long illness. The results of his work will long endure as witness to the ideals of constructive service which inspired him, and I am glad to have this opportunity to pay this grateful tribute to his memory.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.